

J. H. H. H.

THE
WORKS
OF
LAURENCE STERNE.

IN TEN VOLUMES COMPLETE.

CONTAINING,

- I. THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM
SHANDY, GENT.
II. A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY THROUGH
FRANCE AND ITALY.
III. SERMONS. — IV. LETTERS.

WITH
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

VOLUME THE TENTH.

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MDCCLXXXIII.



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LETTERS

OF THE LATE

LAURENCE STERNE:

WITH

A FRAGMENT, IN THE MANNER
OF RABELAIS;

AND

THE HISTORY OF A WATCH-COAT.



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L E T T E R S.

L E T T E R LXXXI.*

TO ELIZA†.

ELIZA will receive my books with this. The sermons came all hot from the heart: I wish that I could give them any title to be offered to yours.—The others came from the

* This and the nine following Letters have no dates to them, but were evidently written in the months of March and April 1767. They are therefore here placed together.

† The Editor of the first publication of Mr. Sterne's Letters to Eliza gives the following account of this lady, " Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, " wife of Daniel Draper, Esq. counsellor at " Bombay, and at present [i. e. in 1775] chief

L E T T E R S.

head—I am more indifferent about their reception.

I know not how it comes about, but I am half in love with you—I ought to be wholly so; for I never valued (or

“ of the factory at Surat, a gentleman very
“ much respected in that quarter of the globe.—
“ She is by birth an East Indian; but the cir-
“ cumstance of being born in the country, not
“ proving sufficient to defend her delicate frame
“ against the heats of that burning climate, she
“ came to England for the recovery of her health,
“ when by accident she became acquainted with
“ Mr. Sterne. He immediately discovered in
“ her a mind so congenial with his own, so en-
“ lightened, so refined, and so tender, that
“ their mutual attraction presently joined them
“ in the closest union that purity could possibly
“ admit of; he loved her as his friend, and prided
“ in her as his pupil; all her concerns became
“ presently his; her health, her circumstances,
“ her reputation, her children, were his; his
“ fortune, his time, his country, were at her
“ disposal, so far as the sacrifice of all or any
“ of these might, in his opinion, contribute to
“ her real happiness. If it is asked, whether the
“ glowing heat of Mr. Sterne’s affection never
“ transported him to a flight beyond the limits
“ of pure Platonism, the publisher will not take

saw more good qualities to value) or thought more of one of your sex than of you; so adieu.

Yours faithfully,
if not affectionately,

L. STERNE.

“ upon him absolutely to deny it; but this he
“ thinks, so far from leaving any stain upon that
“ gentleman’s memory, that it perhaps includes
“ his fairest encomium; since to cherish the
“ seeds of piety and chastity in a heart which the
“ passions are interested to corrupt, must be al-
“ lowed to be the noblest effort of a soul fraught
“ and fortified with the justest sentiments of reli-
“ gion and virtue.”

After reading these Letters, the curiosity of the public will be naturally excited to enquire concerning the fate of the lady to whom they were addressed. To this question it will be sufficient to answer, that she hath been dead some years, and that it might give pain to many worthy persons if the circumstances which attended the latter part of her life were disclosed, as they are generally said to have reflected no credit either on her prudence or discretion.

L E T T E R LXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

I CANNOT rest, Eliza, though I shall call on you at half past twelve, till I know how you do—May thy dear face smile, as thou risest, like the sun of this morning. I was much grieved to hear of your alarming indisposition yesterday; and disappointed too, at not being let in.—Remember, my dear, that a friend has the same right as a physician. The etiquettes of this town (you'll say) say otherwise.—No matter! Delicacy and propriety do not always consist in observing their frigid doctrines.

I am going out to breakfast, but shall be at my lodgings by eleven; when I hope to read a single line under thy own hand, that thou art better, and wilt be glad to see thy Bramin.

9 o'clock.

L E T T E R LXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

I GOT thy letter last night, Eliza, on my return from Lord Bathurst's, where I dined, and where I was heard (as I talked of thee an hour without intermission) with so much pleasure and attention, that the good old Lord toasted your health three different times; and now he is in his eighty-fifth year, says he hopes to live long enough to be introduced as a friend to my fair Indian disciple, and to see her eclipse all other nabobesses as much in wealth, as she does already in exterior and (what is far better) in interior merit. I hope so too. This nobleman is an old friend of mine.—You know he was always the protector of men of wit and genius; and has had those of the last century, Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, Prior, &c. &c. always at his table.—The manner in which his notice began

of me, was as singular as it was polite.—He came up to me, one day, as I was at the princess of Wales's court. "I want to know you, Mr. Sterne; but it is fit you should know, also, who it is that wishes this pleasure. You have heard, continued he, of an old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Popes and Swifts have sung and spoken so much: I have lived my life with geniuses of that cast; but have survived them; and, despairing ever to find their equals, it is some years since I have closed my accounts, and shut up my books, with thoughts of never opening them again; but you have kindled a desire in me of opening them once more before I die; which I now do; so go home and dine with me."—This nobleman, I say, is a prodigy; for at eighty-five he has all the wit and promptness of a man of thirty. A disposition to be pleased, and a power to please others beyond whatever I knew: added to which, a man of learning, courtesy, and feeling.

He heard me talk of thee, Eliza, with uncommon satisfaction;—for there was only a third person, and of sensibility, with us.—And a most sentimental afternoon, 'till nine o'clock, have we passed! But thou, Eliza, wert the star that conducted and enliven'd the discourse.—And when I talked not of thee, still didst thou fill my mind, and warmed every thought I uttered, for I am not ashamed to acknowledge I greatly miss thee.—Best of all good girls! the sufferings I have sustained the whole night on account of thine, Eliza, are beyond my power of words.—Assuredly does Heaven give strength proportioned to the weight he lays upon us! Thou hast been bowed down, my child, with every burden that sorrow of heart, and pain of body, could inflict upon a poor being; and still thou tellest me, thou art beginning to get ease;—thy fever gone, thy sickness, the pain in thy side vanishing also.—May every evil so vanish that thwarts Eliza's happiness, or but awakens thy fears

for a moment!—Fear nothing, my dear!—Hope every thing; and the balm of this passion will shed its influence on thy health, and make thee enjoy a spring of youth and cheerfulness, more than thou hast hardly yet tasted.

And so thou hast fixed thy Bramin's portrait over thy writing-desk; and will consult it in all doubts and difficulties.—Grateful and good girl! Yorick smiles contentedly over all thou doest; his picture does not do justice to his own complacency!

Thy sweet little plan and distribution of thy time—how worthy of thee! Indeed, Eliza, thou leavest me nothing to direct thee in; thou leavest me nothing to require, nothing to ask—but a continuation of that conduct which won my esteem, and has made me thy friend for ever.

May the roses come quick back to thy cheeks, and the rubies to thy lips! But trust my declaration, Eliza, that thy husband (if he is the good, feel-

LETTERS.

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ing man I wish him) will press thee to him with more honest warmth and affection, and kiss thy pale, poor, dejected face, with more transport, than he would be able to do, in the best bloom of all thy beauty ;—and so he ought, or I pity him. He must have strange feelings, if he knows not the value of such a creature as thou art!

I am glad Miss Light* goes with you. She may relieve you from many anxious moments.—I am glad your ship-mates are friendly beings. You could least dispense with what is contrary to your own nature, which is soft and gentle, Eliza.—It would civilize savages.—Though pity were it thou should'st be tainted with the office! How canst thou make apologies for thy last letter? 'tis most delicious to me, for the very reason you excuse it. Write to me, my child, only such.

* Miss Light afterwards married George Stratton, Esq. late in the service of the East-India Company at Madras. She is since dead.

Let them speak the easy carelesness of a heart that opens itself, any how, and every how, to a man you ought to esteem and trust. Such, Eliza, I write to thee,—and so I should ever live with thee, most artlessly, most affectionately, if providence permitted thy residence in the same section of the globe:—for I am, all that honour and affection can make me,

THY BRAMIN,

L E T T E R LXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

I WRITE this, Eliza, at Mr. James's, whilst he is dressing, and the dear girl, his wife, is writing, beside me, to thee.—I got your melancholy billet before we sat down to dinner. 'Tis melancholy indeed, my dear, to hear so piteous an account of thy sickness! Thou art encountered with evils enow, without that additional weight! I fear

it will sink thy poor soul, and body with it, past recovery—Heaven supply thee with fortitude! We have talked of nothing but thee, Eliza, and of thy sweet virtues, and endearing conduct, all the afternoon. Mrs. James, and thy Bramin, have mixt their tears a hundred times, in speaking of thy hardships, thy goodness, thy graces.—The ****'s, by heavens, are worthless! I have heard enough to tremble at the articulation of the name.—How could you, Eliza, leave them (or suffer them to leave you rather) with impressions the least favourable? I have told thee enough to plant disgust against their treachery to thee, to the last hour of thy life! Yet still, thou toldest Mrs. James at last, that thou believest they affectionately love thee.—Her delicacy to my Eliza, and true regard to her ease of mind, have saved thee from hearing more glaring proofs of their baseness—For God's sake, write not to them; nor foul thy fair character with such polluted hearts—*They* love thee!

What proof? Is it their actions that say so? or their zeal for those attachments, which do thee honour, and make thee happy? or their tenderness for thy fame? No—But they *weep*, and say *tender things*.—Adieu to all such for ever. Mrs. James's honest heart revolts against the idea of ever returning them one visit.—I honour her, and I honour thee, for almost every act of thy life, but this blind partiality for an unworthy being.

Forgive my zeal, dear girl, and allow me a right which arises only out of that fund of affection I have, and shall preserve for thee to the hour of my death! Reflect, Eliza, what are my motives for perpetually advising thee? think whether I can have any, but what proceed from the cause I have mentioned! I think you are a very deserving woman; and that you want nothing but firmness, and a better opinion of yourself, to be the best female character I know. I wish I could inspire you with a share of that vanity your

enemies lay to your charge (though to me it has never been visible); because I think, in a well turned mind, it will produce good effects.

I probably shall never see you more; yet I flatter myself you'll sometimes think of me with pleasure; because you must be convinced I love you, and so interest myself in your rectitude, that I had rather hear of any evil befalling you, than your want of reverence for yourself. I had not power to keep this remonstrance in my breast.—It's now out; so adieu. Heaven watch over my Eliza!

Thine,

YORICK.

LETTER LXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

To whom should Eliza apply in her distress, but to her friend who loves her? why then, my dear, do you apologize for employing me? Yorick would be offended, and with reason, if you ever sent commissions to another, which he could execute. I have been with Zumps; and your piano fort  must be tuned from the brass middle string of your guittar, which is C.—I have got you a hammer too, and a pair of plyers to twist your wire with; and may every one of them, my dear, vibrate sweet comfort to my hopes! I have bought you ten handsome brass screws, to hang your necessaries upon: I purchased twelve; but stole a couple from you to put up in my own cabin, at Coxwould—I shall never hang, or take my hat off one of them, but I shall think of you. I have bought

thee, moreover, a couple of iron screws, which are more to be depended on than brass, for the globes.

I have written, also, to Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal, that I had dispatched these in a packet, directed to his care; which I desired he would seek after, the moment the Deal machine arrived. I have, moreover, given him directions, what sort of an arm-chair you would want, and have directed him to purchase the best that Deal could afford, and take it, with the parcel, in the first boat that went off. Would I could, Eliza, so supply all thy wants, and all thy wishes! It would be a state of happiness to me.—The journal is as it should be—all but its contents. Poor, dear, patient being! I do more than pity you; for I think I lose both firmness and philosophy, as I figure to myself your distresses. Do not think I spoke last night with too much asperity of ****; there was cause; and besides, a good heart ought not to love a bad one; and, in-

deed, cannot. But, adieu to the ungrateful subject.

I have been this morning to see Mrs. James—She loves thee tenderly, and unfeignedly.—She is alarmed for thee—She says thou looked'st most ill and melancholy on going away. She pities thee. I shall visit her every Sunday, while I am in town. As this may be my last letter, I earnestly bid thee farewell.—May the God of Kindness be kind to thee, and approve himself thy protector, now thou art defenceless! And, for thy daily comfort, bear in thy mind this truth, that whatever measure of sorrow and distress is thy portion, it will be repaid to thee in a full measure of happiness, by the Being thou hast wisely chosen for thy eternal friend.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza! whilst I live, count upon me as the most warm and disinterested of earthly friends.

YORICK.

L E T T E R LXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAREST ELIZA!

I BEGAN a new journal this morning; you shall see it; for if I live not till your return to England, I will leave it you as a legacy. 'Tis a sorrowful page; but I will write cheerful ones; and could I write letters to thee, they should be cheerful ones too: but few, I fear, will reach thee! However, depend upon receiving something of the kind by every post; till then, thou wavest thy hand, and bid'st me write no more.

Tell me how you are; and what fort of fortitude Heaven inspires you with. How are you accommodated, my dear? Is all right? Scribble away, any thing, and every thing to me. Depend upon seeing me at Deal, with the James's,

should you be detained there by contrary winds.—Indeed, Eliza, I should with pleasure fly to you, could I be the means of rendering you any service, or doing you kindness. Gracious and merciful God! consider the anguish of a poor girl.—Strengthen and preserve her in all the shocks her frame must be exposed to. She is now without a protector, but thee! Save her from all accidents of a dangerous element, and give her comfort at the last.

My prayer, Eliza, I hope, is heard; for the sky seems to smile upon me, as I look up to it. I am just returned from our dear Mrs. James's, where I have been talking of thee for three hours.—She has got your picture, and likes it: but Marriot, and some other judges, agree that mine is the better, and expressive of a sweeter character. But what is that to the original? yet I acknowledge that hers is a picture for the world, and mine is calculated only to please a very sincere friend, or sentimental philosopher.—In the

one, you are dressed in smiles, and with all the advantages of silks, pearls, and ermine ;—in the other, simple as a vestal—appearing the good girl nature made you ;— which, to me, conveys an idea of more unaffected sweetness, than Mrs. Draper, habited for conquest, in a birth-day suit, with her countenance animated, and her dimples visible.—If I remember right, Eliza, you endeavoured to collect every charm of your person into your face, with more than *common* care, the day you sat for Mrs. James—Your colour, too, brightened ; and your eyes shone with more than usual brilliancy. I then requested you to come simple and undorned when you sat for me—knowing (as I see with *unprejudiced* eyes) that you could receive no addition from the silk-worm's aid, or jeweller's polish. Let me now tell you a truth, which, I believe, I have uttered before.—When I first saw you, I beheld you as an object of compassion, and as a very plain woman. The mode of your

dress (tho' fashionable) disfigured you. —But nothing now could render you such, but the being solicitous to make yourself admired as a handsome one. —You are not handsome, Eliza, nor is yours a face that will please the tenth part of your beholders,—but are something more; for I scruple not to tell you, I never saw so intelligent, so animated, so good a countenance; nor was there (nor ever will be) that man of sense, tenderness, and feeling, in your company three hours, that was not (or will not be) your admirer, or friend, in consequence of it; that is, if you assume, or assumed, no character foreign to your own, but appeared the artless being nature designed you for. A something in your eyes, and voice, you possess in a degree more persuasive than any woman I ever saw, read, or heard of. But it is that bewitching sort of nameless excellence, that men of nice sensibility alone can be touched with.

Were your husband in England, I would freely give him five hundred pounds (if money could purchase the acquisition), to let you only sit by me two hours in a day, while I wrote my *Sentimental Journey*. I am sure the work would sell so much the better for it, that I should be reimbursed the sum more than seven times told.—I would not give nine pence for the picture of you the Newnhams have got executed.—It is the resemblance of a conceited, made-up coquette. Your eyes, and the shape of your face (the latter the most perfect oval I ever saw), which are perfections that must strike the most indifferent judge, because they are equal to any of God's works in a similar way, and finer than any I beheld in all my travels, are manifestly injured by the affected leer of the one, and strange appearance of the other; owing to the attitude of the head, which is a proof of the artist's, or your friend's

false taste. The ****'s who verify the character I once gave of teasing, or sticking like pitch, or birdlime, sent a card that they would wait on Mrs. **** on Friday.—She sent back, she was engaged.—Then to meet at Ranelagh, to-night.—She answered, she did not go.—She says, if she allows the least footing, she never shall get rid of the acquaintance; which she is resolved to drop at once. She knows them. She knows they are not her friends, nor yours; and the first use they would make of being with her, would be to sacrifice you to her (if they could) a second time. Let her not then; let her not, my dear, be a greater friend to thee, than thou art to thyself. She begs I will reiterate my request to you, that you will not write to them. It will give her, and thy Bramin, inexpressible pain. Be assured, all this is not without reason on her side. I have my reasons too; the first of which is, that I should grieve to excess, if Eliza

wanted that fortitude her Yorick has built so high upon. I said I never more would mention the name to thee; and had I not received it, as a kind of charge, from a dear woman that loves you, I should not have broke my word. I will write again to-morrow to thee, thou best and most endearing of girls! A peaceful night to thee. My spirit will be with thee through every watch of it.

Adieu.

L E T T E R LXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

I THINK you could act no otherwise than you did with the young soldier. There was no shutting the door against him, either in politeness or humanity. Thou tellest me he seems susceptible of tender impressions: and that before Miss Light has failed a

fortnight, he will be in love with her, —Now I think it a thousand times more likely that he attaches himself to thee, Eliza; because thou art a thousand times more amiable. Five months with Eliza; and in the same room; and an amorous son of Mars besides! — “*It can no be masser.*” The sun, if he could avoid it, would not shine upon a dunghill; but his rays are so pure, Eliza, and celestial, —I never heard that they were polluted by it. —Just such will thine be, dearest child, in this, and every such situation you will be exposed to, till thou art fixed for life. —But thy discretion, thy wisdom, thy honour, the spirit of thy Yorick, and thy own spirit, which is equal to it, will be thy ablest counsellors.

Surely, by this time, something is doing for thy accommodation. —But why may not clean washing and rubbing do instead of painting your cabin, as it is to be hung? Paint is so pernicious

cious, both to your nerves and lungs, and will keep you so much longer too, out of your apartment; where, I hope, you will pass some of your happiest hours.—

I fear the best of your shipmates are only genteel by comparison with the contrasted crew, with which thou must behold them. So was—you know who!—from the same fallacy that was put upon the judgment, when—but I will not mortify you. If they are decent, and distant, it is enough; and as much as is to be expected. If any of them are more, I rejoice;—thou wilt want every aid; and 'tis thy due to have them. Be cautious only, my dear, of intimacies. Good hearts are open and fall naturally into them. Heaven inspire thine with fortitude, in this, and every deadly trial. Best of God's works, farewell! Love me, I beseech thee; and remember me for ever!

I am, my Eliza and will ever be, in
the most comprehensive sense,

Thy friend,

YORICK.

P. S. Probably you will have an opportunity of writing to me by some Dutch or French ship, or from the Cape de Verd Islands—it will reach me somehow.—

L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR ELIZA!

OH! I grieve for your cabin.—And the fresh painting will be enough to destroy every nerve about thee. Nothing so pernicious as white lead. Take care of yourself, dear girl; and sleep not in it too soon. It will be enough to give you a stroke of an epilepsy. I hope you will have left the ship; and

that my Letters may meet, and greet you, as you get out of your post-chaise, at Deal.—When you have got them all, put them, my dear, into some order.—The first eight or nine are numbered: but I wrote the rest without that direction to thee; but thou wilt find them out, by the day or hour, which, I hope, I have generally prefixed to them. When they are got together, in chronological order, sew them together under a cover. I trust they will be a perpetual refuge to thee, from time to time; and that thou wilt (when weary of fools, and uninteresting discourse) retire, and converse an hour with them, and me.

I have not had power, or the heart, to aim at enlivening any one of them, with a single stroke of wit or humour; but they contain something better; and what you will feel more suited to your situation—a long detail of much advice, truth, and knowledge. I hope, too, you will perceive loose touches of an honest heart, in every one of them;

which speak more than the most studied periods; and will give thee more ground of trust and reliance upon Yorick, than all that laboured eloquence could supply. Lean then thy whole weight, Eliza, upon them and upon me. "May poverty, distress, anguish, and shame, be my portion, if ever I give thee reason to repent the knowledge of me!"—With this asseveration, made in the presence of a just God, I pray to him, that so it may speed with me, as I deal candidly, and honourably with thee! I would not mislead thee, Eliza; I would not injure thee, in the opinion of a single individual, for the richest crown the proudest monarch wears.

Remember, that while I have life and power, whatever is mine, you may style, and think, your's—Though sorry should I be, if ever my friendship was put to the test thus, for your own delicacy's sake.—Money and counters are of equal use, in my opinion; they both serve to set up with.

I hope you will answer me this letter ; but if thou art debarred by the elements, which hurry thee away, I will write one for thee ; and knowing it is such a one as thou would'st have written, I will regard it as my Eliza's.

Honour, and happiness, and health, and comforts of every kind, sail along with thee, thou most worthy of girls ! I will live for thee, and my Lydia—be rich for the dear children of my heart—gain wisdom, gain fame, and happiness, to share with them—with thee—and her, in my old age.—Once for all, adieu. Preserve thy life ; steadily pursue the ends we proposed ; and let nothing rob thee of those powers Heaven has given thee for thy well-being.

What can I add more, in the agitation of mind I am in, and within five minutes of the last postman's bell, but recommend thee to Heaven, and recommend myself to Heaven with thee, in the same fervent ejaculation, “ that we may be happy, and meet again ;

if not in this world, in the next.”—
Adieu,—I am thine, Eliza, affectionately,
and everlastingly,

YORICK.

L E T T E R LXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

I WISH to God, Eliza, it was possible to postpone the voyage to India, for another year.—For I am firmly persuaded within my own heart, that thy husband could never limit thee with regard to time.

I fear that Mr. B—— has exaggerated matters.—I like not his countenance. It is absolutely killing.—Should evil befall thee, what will he not have to answer for? I know not the being that will be deserving of so much pity, or that I shall hate more. He will be an outcast, alien—In which case I will be a father to thy

children, my good girl!—therefore take no thought about them.—

But, Eliza, if thou art so very ill, still put off all thoughts of returning to India this year.—Write to your husband—tell him the truth of your case.—If he is the generous, humane man you describe him to be, he cannot but applaud your conduct.—I am credibly informed, that his repugnance to your living in England arises only from the dread, which has entered his brain, that thou mayest run him in debt, beyond thy appointments, and that he must discharge them—that such a creature should be sacrificed for the paltry consideration of a few hundreds, is too, too hard! Oh! my child! that I could, with propriety, indemnify him for every charge, even to the last mite, that thou hast been of to him! With joy would I give him my whole subsistence—nay, sequester my livings, and trust the treasures Heaven has furnished my head with, for a future subsistence.—

You owe much, I allow, to your husband,—you owe something to appearances, and the opinion of the world; but, trust me, my dear, you owe much likewise to yourself.—Return, therefore, from Deal, if you continue ill.—I will prescribe for you, gratis.—You are not the first woman, by many, I have done so for, with success. I will send for my wife and daughter, and they shall carry you in pursuit of health, to Montpellier, the wells of Bançois, the Spa, or whither thou wilt. Thou shalt direct them, and make parties of pleasure in what corner of the world fancy points out to thee. We shall fish upon the banks of Arno, and lose ourselves in the sweet labyrinths of its vallies.—And then thou should'st warble to us, as I have once or twice heard thee,—“I'm lost, I'm lost”—but we should find thee again, my Eliza.—Of a similar nature to this, was your physician's prescription: “Use gentle exercise, the pure southern air of France, or milder Naples

—with the society of friendly, gentle beings.” Sensible man! He certainly entered into your feelings. He knew the fallacy of medicine to a creature, whose ILLNESS HAS ARISEN FROM THE AFFLICTION OF HER MIND. Time only, my dear, I fear you must trust to, and have your reliance on; may it give you the health so enthusiastic a votary to the charming goddess deserves!

I honour you, Eliza, for keeping secret some things, which, if explained, had been a panegyric on yourself. There is a dignity in venerable affliction which will not allow it to appeal to the world for pity or redress. Well have you supported that character, my amiable, philosophic friend! And, indeed, I begin to think you have as many virtues as my uncle Toby’s widow.—I don’t mean to insinuate, hussy, that *my* opinion is no better founded than his was of Mrs. Wadman; nor do I conceive it possible for any *Trim* to convince me it is equally fallacious.—I am sure, while I have my reason, it is not.—Talking of widows—pray, Eliza, if ever you are such, do

not think of giving yourself to some wealthy nabob—because I design to marry you myself.—My wife cannot live long—she has sold all the provinces in France already—and I know not the woman I should like so well for her substitute as yourself.—'Tis true, I am ninety-five in constitution, and you but twenty-five—rather too great a disparity this!—but what I want in youth, I will make up in wit and good humour.—Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Main-tenon, or Waller his Sacharissa, as I will love and sing thee, my wife elect! All those names, eminent as they were, shall give place to thine, Eliza. Tell me, in answer to this, that you approve and honour the proposal, and that you would (like the Spectator's mistress) have more joy in putting on an old man's slipper, than associating with the gay, the voluptuous, and the young.—Adieu, my Simplicia!

Yours,

TRISTRAM.

L E T T E R X C.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR ELIZA!

I HAVE been within the verge of the gates of death.—I was ill the last time I wrote to you, and apprehensive of what would be the consequence.—My fears were but too well founded; for, in ten minutes after I dispatched my letter, this poor, fine-spun frame of Yorick's gave way, and I broke a vessel in my breast, and could not stop the loss of blood till four this morning. I have filled all thy India handkerchiefs with it.—It came, I think, from my heart! I fell asleep through weakness. At six I awoke, with the bosom of my shirt steeped in tears. I dreamt I was sitting under the canopy of Indolence, and that thou camest into the room, with a shawl in thy hand, and told me, my spirit had flown to thee in the Downs, with tidings

of my fate ; and that you were come to administer what consolation filial affection could bestow, and to receive my parting breath and blessing.—With that you folded the shawl about my waist, and, kneeling, supplicated my attention. I awoke ; but in what a frame ! Oh ! my God ! “ But thou wilt number my tears, and put them all into thy bottle.”—Dear girl ! I see thee,—thou art for ever present to my fancy,—embracing my feeble knees, and raising thy fine eyes to bid me be of comfort : and when I talk to Lydia, the words of Esau, as uttered by thee, perpetually ring in my ears—“ Bless *me* even also, my father !”—Blessing attend thee, thou child of my heart !

My bleeding is quite stopped, and I feel the principle of life strong within me ; so be not alarmed, Eliza—I know I shall do well. I have eat my breakfast with hunger ; and I write to thee with a pleasure arising from that prophetic impression in my imagination, that “ all will terminate to our heart’s content.”

Comfort thyself eternally with this persuasion, "that the best of beings (as thou hast sweetly expressed it) could not, by a combination of accidents, produce such a chain of events, merely to be the source of misery to the leading person engaged in them." The observation was very applicable, very good, and very elegantly expressed. I wish my memory did justice to the wording of it.—Who taught you the art of writing so sweetly, Eliza?—You have absolutely exalted it to a science!—When I am in want of ready cash, and ill health will not permit my genius to exert itself, I shall print your letters, as finished essays, "by an unfortunate Indian lady." The style is new; and would almost be a sufficient recommendation for their selling well, without merit—but their sense, natural ease, and spirit, is not to be equalled, I believe, in this section of the globe; nor, I will answer for it, by any of your country-women in yours.—I have shewn your letter to Mrs. B—, and to half the literati in town.—You shall not be an-

gry with me for it, because I meant to do you honour by it.—You cannot imagine how many admirers your epistolary productions have gained you, that never viewed your external merits. I only wonder where thou could'st acquire thy graces, thy goodness, thy accomplishments—so connected! so educated! Nature has surely studied to make thee her peculiar care—for thou art (and not in my eyes alone) the best and fairest of all her works.—

And so this is the last letter thou art to receive from me; because the Earl of Chatham* (I read in the papers) is got to the Downs; and the wind, I find, is fair. If so—blessed woman! take my last, last farewell!—Cherish the remembrance of me; think how I esteem, nay, how affectionately I love thee, and what a price I set upon thee! Adieu, adieu! and with my adieu—let me give thee one straight rule of conduct, that thou

* By the Newspapers of the times it appears that the *Earl of Chatham* East-Indiaman failed from Deal, April 3, 1767.

hast heard from my lips in a thousand forms—but I concenter it in one word,

REVERENCE THYSELF.

Adieu, once more, Eliza! May no anguish of heart plant a wrinkle upon thy face, till I behold it again! May no doubt or misgivings disturb the serenity of thy mind, or awaken a painful thought about thy children—for they are Yorick's—and Yorick is thy friend for ever!—Adieu, adieu, adieu!

P. S. Remember, that Hope shortens all journies, by sweetening them—so sing my little stanza on the subject, with the devotion of an hymn, every morning when thou arisest, and thou wilt eat thy breakfast with more comfort for it.

Blessings, rest, and Hygeia go with thee! May'st thou soon return, in peace and affluence, to illume my night! I am, and shall be, the last to deplore thy loss, and will be the first to congratulate and hail thy return.—

FARE THEE WELL!

D 4

L E T T E R XCI.

TO MISS STERNE.

Bond Street, April 9, 1767.

THIS letter, my dear Lydia, will distress thy good heart, for from the beginning thou wilt perceive no entertaining strokes of humour in it—I cannot be cheerful when a thousand melancholy ideas surround me—I have met with a loss of near fifty pounds, which I was taken in for in an extraordinary manner—but what is that loss in comparison of one I may experience?—Friendship is the balm and cordial of life, and without it, 'tis a heavy load not worth sustaining.—I am unhappy—thy mother and thyself at a distance from me, and what can compensate for such a destitution?—For God's sake, persuade her to come and fix in England, for life is too short to waste in separation—and whilst she lives in

one country, and I in another, many people will suppose it proceeds from choice—besides, I want thee near me, thou child and darling of my heart!—I am in a melancholy mood, and my Lydia's eyes will smart with weeping, when I tell her the cause that now affects me.—I am apprehensive the dear friend I mentioned in my last letter is going into a decline—I was with her two days ago, and I never beheld a being so altered—she has a tender frame, and looks like a drooping lily, for the roses are fled from her cheeks—I can never see or talk to this incomparable woman without bursting into tears—I have a thousand obligations to her, and I owe her more than her whole sex, if not all the world put together—She has a delicacy in her way of thinking that few possess—our conversations are of the most interesting nature, and she talks to me of quitting this world with more composure than others think of living in it.—I have wrote an epitaph, of which I send thee a copy.—'Tis expressive of her modest

worth—but may heaven restore her ! and
may she live to write mine !

Columns and labour'd urns but vainly shew
An idle scene of decorated woe.
The sweet companion, and the friend sincere,
Need no mechanic help to force the tear.
In heart-felt numbers, never meant to shine,
'Twill flow eternal o'er a hearse like thine.
'Twill flow whilst gentle goodness has one
friend,
Or kindred tempers have a tear to lend.

Say all that is kind of me to thy mother,
and believe me, my Lydia, that I
love thee most truly—So adieu—I am
what I ever was, and hope ever shall
be,

Thy affectionate Father,

L. S.

As to Mr. —, by your description
he is a fat fool. I beg you will not give
up your time to such a being—Send me
some *batons pour les dents*—there are none
good here.

L E T T E R XCII.

TO LADY P.

Mount Coffee-house, Tuesday 3 o'clock.

TH**E**R**E** is a strange mechanical effect produced in writing a billet-doux within a stone-cast of the lady who engrosses the heart and soul of an innamorato—for this cause (but mostly because I am to dine in this neighbourhood) have I, Tristram Shandy, come forth from my lodgings to a coffee-house the nearest I could find to my dear Lady ——'s house, and have called for a sheet of gilt paper, to try the truth of this article of my creed—Now for it—

O my dear lady, what a disclosure of a soul hast thou made of me!—I think, by the bye, this is a little too familiar an introduction for so unfamiliar a situation as I stand in with you—where heaven knows, I am kept at a distance—and despair of getting one

inch nearer you, with all the steps and windings I can think of to recommend myself to you—Would not any man in his senses run diametrically from you—and as far as his legs would carry him, rather than thus causelessly, foolishly, and fool-hardily expose himself afresh—and afresh, where his heart and his reason tells him he shall be sure to come off loser, if not totally undone?—Why would you tell me you would be glad to see me?—Does it give you pleasure to make me more unhappy—or does it add to your triumph, that your eyes and lips have turned a man into a fool, whom the rest of the town is courting as a wit?—I am a fool—the weakest, the most ductile, the most tender fool, that ever woman tried the weakness of—and the most unsettled in my purposes and resolutions of recovering my right mind.—It is but an hour ago, that I kneeled down and swore I never would come near you—and after saying my Lord's Prayer for the sake of the close, *of not being led*

into temptation—out I sallied like any Christian hero, ready to take the field against the world, the flesh, and the devil; not doubting but I should finally trample them all down under my feet—and now am I got so near you—within this vile stone's cast of your house—I feel myself drawn into a vortex, that has turned my brain upside downwards, and though I had purchased a box ticket to carry me to Miss *****'s benefit, yet I know very well, that was a single line directed to me, to let me know Lady —— would be alone at seven, and suffer me to spend the evening with her, she would infallibly see every thing verified I have told her.—I dine at Mr. C——r's in Wigmore-street, in this neighbourhood, where I shall stay till seven, in hopes you purpose to put me to this proof. If I hear nothing by that time, I shall conclude you are better disposed of—and shall take a sorry hack, and sorrily jog on to the play—Curse on the word. I

know nothing but sorrow—except this one thing, that I love you (perhaps foolishly, but)

most sincerely.

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XCIII.

TO MR. AND MRS. J.

Old Bond-street, April 21, 1767.

I AM sincerely affected, my dear Mr. and Mrs. J——, by your friendly enquiry, and the interest you are so good to take in my health. God knows I am not able to give a good account of myself, having passed a bad night in much feverish agitation.—My physician ordered me to bed, and to keep therein till some favourable change—I fell ill the moment I got to my lodgings—he says it is owing to my taking James's Powder, and venturing out on so cold a day as Sunday—but he is mistaken, for I am certain what

ever bears the name must have efficacy with me—I was bled yesterday, and again to-day, and have been almost dead; but this friendly enquiry from Gerrard-street has poured balm into what blood I have left—I hope still (and next to the sense of what I owe my friends) it shall be the last pleasurable sensation I will part with—if I continue mending, it will yet be some time before I shall have strength enough to get out in a carriage—my first visit will be a visit of true gratitude—I leave my kind friends to guess where—a thousand blessings go along with this, and may heaven preserve you both—Adieu, my dear Sir, and dear lady.

I am your ever obliged

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XCIV.

TO IGNATIUS SANCHO.

Bond-street, Saturday [April 25, 1767].

I WAS very sorry, my good Sancho, that I was not at home to return my compliments by you for the great courtesy of the Duke of M—g—'s family to me, in honouring my list of subscribers with their names—for which I bear them all thanks.—But you have something to add, Sancho, to what I owe your good will also on this account, and that is, to send me the subscription money, which I find a necessity of dunning my best friends for before I leave town—to avoid the perplexities of both keeping pecuniary accounts (for which I have very slender talents), and collecting them (for which I have neither strength of body or mind); and so, good Sancho, dun the Duke of M. the Duchess of M. and Lord M. for their

subscriptions, and lay the sin, and money with it too, at my door—I wish so good a family every blessing they merit, along with my humblest compliments. You know, Sancho, that I am your friend and well-wisher,

L. STERNE.

P. S. I leave town on Friday morning—and should on Thursday, but that I stay to dine with Lord and Lady S——.

L E T T E R XCV.

TO THE EARL OF S——.

Old Bond-street, May 1, 1767.

MY LORD,

I WAS yesterday taking leave of all the town, with an intention of leaving it this day, but I am detained by the kindness of Lord and Lady S——, who have made a party to dine and sup on my account—I am impatient to set out for my solitude, for there the mind

gains strength, and learns to lean upon herself—In the world it seeks or accepts of a few treacherous supports—the feigned compassion of one—the flattery of a second—the civilities of a third—the friendship of a fourth—they all deceive, and bring the mind back to where mine is retreating, to retirement, reflection, and books. My departure is fixed for to-morrow morning, but I could not think of quitting a place where I have received such numberless and unmerited civilities from your lordship, without returning my most grateful thanks, as well as my hearty acknowledgments for your friendly enquiry from Bath. Illness, my Lord, has occasioned my silence—Death knocked at my door, but I would not admit him—the call was both unexpected and unpleasant—and I am seriously worn down to a shadow—and still very weak;—but weak as I am, I have as whimsical a story to tell you as ever befel one of my family—Shandy's nose, his name, his sash window are fools to it—it will serve at least to

amuse you—The injury I did myself last month in catching cold upon James's Powder—fell, you must know, upon the worst part it could—the most painful, and most dangerous of any in the human body. It was on this crisis I called in an able surgeon and with him an able physician (both my friends) to inspect my disaster—'Tis a venereal case, cried my two scientific friends—'Tis impossible, however, to be that, replied I—for I have had no commerce whatever with the sex, not even with my wife, added I, these fifteen years.—You are, however, my good friend, said the surgeon, or there is no such case in the world—What the devil, said I, without knowing woman? —We will not reason about it, said the physician, but you must undergo a course of mercury—I will lose my life first, said I—and trust to nature, to time, or at the worst to death—So I put an end, with some indignation, to the conference—and determined to bear all the torments I underwent, and ten

times more, rather than submit to be treated like a *sinner*, in a point where I had acted like a *saint*.—Now as the father of mischief would have it, who has no pleasure like that of dishonouring the righteous, it so fell out that from the moment I dismissed my doctors, my pains began to rage with a violence not to be expressed, or supported. Every hour became more intolerable.—I was got to bed, cried out, and raved the whole night, and was got up so near dead that my friends, insisted upon my sending again for my physician and surgeon. I told them upon the word of a man of honour they were both mistaken, as to my case—but though they had reasoned wrong, they might act right; but that sharp as my sufferings were, I felt them not so sharp as the imputation which a venereal treatment of my case laid me under—They answered, that these taints of the blood laid dormant twenty years; but they would not reason with me in a point wherein I was so delicate, but would

do all the office for which they were called in, namely to put an end to my torment, which otherwise would put an end to me—and so I have been compelled to surrender myself—and thus, my dear Lord, has your poor friend with all his sensibilities been suffering the chastisement of the grossest sensualist.—Was it not as ridiculous an embarrassment as ever Yorick's spirit was involved in?—Nothing but the purest conscience of innocence could have tempted me to write this story to my wife, which by the bye would make no bad anecdote in Tristram Shandy's Life.—I have mentioned it in my journal to Mrs. ——. In some respects there is no difference between my wife and herself—when they fare alike, neither can reasonably complain—I have just received letters from France, with some hints that Mrs. Sterne and my Lydia are coming to England, to pay me a visit—if your time is not better employed, Yorick flatters himself he shall receive

a letter from your lordship, *en attendant*.
I am with the greatest regard,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most faithful humble servant,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XCVI.

TO J. D——N, ESQ.

Old Bond-street, Friday morning.

I WAS going, my dear D—n, to bed before I received your kind enquiry, and now my chaise stands at my door to take and convey this poor body to its legal settlement.—I am ill, very ill, —I languish most affectingly—I am sick both soul and body—it is a cordial to me to hear it is different with you —no man interests himself more in your happiness, and I am glad you

are in so fair a road to it—enjoy it long, my D. whilst I—no matter what—but my feelings are too nice for the world I live in—things will mend.—I dined yesterday with Lord and Lady S—; we talked much of you, and your goings on, for every one knows why Sunbury Hill is so pleasant a situation!—You rogue! you have lock'd up my boots—and I go bootless home—and I fear I shall go bootless all my life—Adieu, gentlest and best of souls—adieu.

I am yours most affectionately,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XCVII.

TO J— H— S—, ESQ.

Newark, Monday ten o'clock in the morn.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I HAVE got conveyed thus far like a bale of cadaverous goods consigned to Pluto and company—lying in the bottom of my chaise most of the route, upon a large pillow which I had the *prevoyance* to purchase before I set out—I am worn out—but press on to Barnby Moor to-night, and if possible to York the next.—I know not what is the matter with me—but some *derangement* presses hard upon this machine—still I think it will not be overset this bout.—My love to G.—We shall all meet from the east, and from the south, and (as at the last) be happy together—My kind respects to a few.—I am, dear H.

Truly yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XCVIII.

TO A. L — E, ESQ.

DEAR L — E, Coxwoud, June 7, 1767.

I HAD not been many days at this peaceful cottage before your letter greeted me with the seal of friendship, and most cordially do I thank you for so kind a proof of your good will—I was truly anxious to hear of the recovery of my sentimental friend—but I would not write to enquire after her, unless I could have sent her the testimony without the tax, for even howd'yes to invalids, or those that have lately been so, either call to mind what is past or what may return—at least I find it so. I am as happy as a prince, at Coxwoud—and I wish you could see in how princely a manner I live—'tis a land of plenty. I sit down alone to venison, fish and wild fowl, or a couple of fowls or ducks, with curds, and strawberries, and cream, and all the simple

plenty with a rich valley (under Hamilton Hills) can produce—with a clean cloth on my table—and a bottle of wine on my right hand to drink your health. I have a hundred hens and chickens about my yard—and not a parifhioner catches a hare, or a rabbit, or a trout, but he brings it as an offering to me. If folitude would cure a love-fick heart, I would give you an invitation—but abfence and time leffen no attachment which virtue infpires. I am in high fpirits—care never enters this cottage—I take the air every day in my poft-chaise, with two long-tailed horfes—they turn out good ones; and as to myfelf, I think I am better upon the whole for the medicines and regimen I fubmitted to in town—May you, dear L——, want neither the one, nor the other!

Yours truly,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R XCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Coxwold, June 30, 1767.

I AM in still better health, my dear L——e, than when I wrote last to you—owing I believe to my riding out every day with my friend H——, whose castle lies near the sea—and there is a beach as even as a mirrour, of five miles in length, before it—where we daily run races in our chaises, with one wheel in the sea, and the other on land.—D—— has obtained his fair Indian, and has this post sent a letter of enquiries after Yorick, and his Bramin. He is a good soul, and interests himself much in our fate—I cannot forgive you, L——e, for your folly in saying you intend to get introduced to the——. I despise them, and I shall hold your understanding much cheaper than I now do, if you persist in a resolution so unworthy of

you.—I suppose Mrs. J—— telling you they were sensible, is the ground-work you go upon—by—they are not clever; though what is commonly called wit, may pass for literature on the other side of Temple-bar.—You say Mrs. J—— thinks them amiable—she judges too favourably; but I have put a stop to her intentions of visiting them.—They are bitter enemies of mine, and I am even with them. La Bramine assured me they used their endeavours with her to break off her friendship with me, for reasons I will not write, but tell you.—I said enough of them before she left England and though she yielded to me in every other point, yet in this she obstinately persisted.—Strange infatuation!—but I think I have effected my purpose by a falsity, which Yorick's friendship to the Bramine can only justify.—I wrote her word that the most amiable of women reiterated my request, that she would not write to them. I said too, she had concealed many things for the sake of her peace of mind—

when in fact, L——e, this was merely a child of my own brain, made Mrs. J——'s by adoption, to enforce the argument I had before urged so strongly. —Do not mention this circumstance to Mrs. J——, 'twould displease her—and I had no design in it but for the Bramine to be a friend to herself.—I ought now to be busy from sun-rise to sun-set, for I have a book to write—a wife to receive—an estate to sell—a parish to superintend, and, what is worst of all, a disquieted heart to reason with—these are continual calls upon me—I have received half a dozen letters to press me to join my friends at Scarborough, but I am at present deaf to them all.—I perhaps may pass a few days there something later in the season, not at present—and so, dear L——e, adieu.

I am most cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R C.

TO IGNATUS SANCHO.

Coxwold, June 30 [1767].

I MUST acknowledge the courtesy of my good friend Sancho's letter were I ten times busier than I am, and must thank him too for the many expressions of his good will, and good opinion—'Tis all affectation to say a man is not gratified with being praised—we only want it to be sincere—and then it will be taken, Sancho, as kindly as yours. I left town very poorly—and with an idea I was taking leave of it for ever—but good air, a quiet retreat, and quiet reflections along with it, with an ass to milk, and another ride upon (if I chuse it), all together do wonders.—I shall live this year at least, I hope, be it but to give the world, before I quit it, as good impressions of me, as you have, Sancho. I would only covenant for just

so much health and spirits, as are sufficient to carry my pen through the task I have set it this summer.—But I am a resigned being, Sancho, and take health and sickness, as I do light and darkness, or the vicissitudes of seasons—that is, just as it pleases GOD to send them—and accommodate myself to their periodical returns, as well as I can—only taking care, whatever befalls me in this silly world—not to lose my temper at it.—This I believe, friend Sancho, to be the truest philosophy—for this we must be indebted to ourselves, but not to our fortunes.—Farewel—I hope you will not forget your custom of giving me a call at my lodgings next winter—in the mean time, I am very cordially,

My honest friend Sancho,

Yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R C I.

TO MR. AND MRS. J.

Coxwold, July 6, 1767.

IT is with as much true gratitude as ever heart felt, that I sit down to thank my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. J—— for the continuation of their attention to me; but for this last instance of their humanity and politeness to me, I must ever be their debtor—I never can thank you enough, my dear friends, and yet I thank you from my soul—and for the single day's happiness your goodness would have sent me, I wish I could send you back thousands—I cannot, but they will come of themselves—and so God bless you.—I have had twenty times my pen in my hand since I came down, to write a letter to you both in Gerrard-street—but I am a shy kind of a soul at the bottom, and have a jealousy about troubling my friends, especially about

myself.—I am now got perfectly well, but was, a month after my arrival in the country, in but a poor state—my body has got the start, and is at present more at ease than my mind—but this world is a school of trials, and so heaven's will be done!—I hope you have both enjoyed all that I have wanted—and to complete your joy, that your little lady flourishes like a vine at your table, to which I hope to see her preferred by next winter.—I am now beginning to be truly busy at my Sentimental Journey—the pains and sorrows of this life having retarded its progress—but I shall make up my leeway, and overtake every body in a very short time.

What can I send you that Yorkshire produces? tell me—I want to be of use to you, for I am, my dear friends, with the truest value and esteem,

Your ever obliged

L. STERNE.

LETTER CII.

TO MR. PANCHAUD, AT PARIS.

York, July 20, 1767.

MY DEAR PANCHAUD,

BE so kind as to forward what letters are arrived for Mrs. Sterne at your office by to-day's post, or the next, and she will receive them before she quits Avignon, for England—she wants to lay out a little money in an annuity for her daughter—advise her to get her own life insured in London, lest my Lydia should die before her.—If there are any packets, send them with the ninth volume* of Shandy, which she has failed of getting—she says she has drawn for fifty louis—when she leaves Paris, send by her my account.—Have you got me any French subscriptions, or subscriptions in France?—Pre-

* Alluding to the first edition.

sent my kindest service to Miss P. I know her politeness and good-nature will incline her to give Mrs. J. her advice about what she may venture to bring over.—I hope every thing goes on well, though never half so well as I wish—God prosper you, my dear friend—Believe me most warmly

Yours,

L. STERNE.

The sooner you send me the gold snuff-box, the better—'tis a present from my best friend.

L E T T E R CIII.

TO MR. AND MRS. J.

Coxwould, August 2, 1767.

MY dear friends Mr. and Mrs. J—
are infinitely kind to me, in sending now and then a letter to inquire after me—and to acquaint me how they are.

—You cannot conceive, my dear lady, how truly I bear a part in your illness.—I wish Mr. J— would carry you to the south of France in pursuit of health—but why need I wish it, when I know his affection will make him do that and ten times as much to prevent a return of those symptoms which alarmed him so much in the spring—Your politeness and humanity are always contriving to treat me agreeably, and what you promise next winter, will be perfectly so—but you must get well—and your little dear girl must be of the party, with her parents and friends, to give it a relish—I am sure you shew no partiality, but what is natural and praise-worthy, in behalf of your daughter, but I wonder my friends will not find her a play-fellow; and I both hope and advise them not to venture along through this warfare of life without two strings at least to their bow.—I had letters from France by last night's post, by which (by some fatality) I find not one of my letters has reached Mrs. Sterne. This gives me concern,

as it wears the aspect of unkindness, which she by no means merits from me. —My wife and dear girl are coming to pay me a visit for a few months;—I wish I may prevail with them to tarry longer. —You must permit me, dear Mrs. J, to make my Lydia known to you, if I can prevail with my wife to come and spend a little time in London, as she returns to France. I expect a small parcel—may I trouble you, before you write next, to send to my lodgings to ask if there is any thing directed to me that you can inclose under cover.—I have but one excuse for this freedom, which I am prompted to use, from a persuasion that it is doing you pleasure to give you an opportunity of doing an obliging thing—and as to myself, I rest satisfied, for 'tis only scoring up another debt of thanks to the millions I owe you both already—Receive a thousand and a thousand thanks, yes, and with them ten thousand friendly wishes for all you wish in this world—May my friend Mr. J.

continue blessed with good health, and may his good lady get perfectly well, there being no woman's health or comfort I so ardently pray for.—Adieu, my dear friends—believe me most truly and faithfully yours,

L. STERNE.

P. S. In Eliza's last letter, dated from St. Jago, she tells me, as she does you, that she is extremely ill—God protect her!—By this time surely she has set foot upon dry land at Madras—I heartily wish her well, and if Yorick was with her, he would tell her so—but he is cut off from this, by bodily absence—I am present with her in spirit, however—but what is that? you will say.

L E T T E R C I V.

TO J—H—S, ESQ.

MY DEAR H. Coxwoud, August 11, 1767.

I AM glad all has passed with so much amity *inter te & filium Marcum tuum*, and that Madame has found grace in thy sight—All is well that ends well—and so much for moralizing upon it. I wish you could, or would, take up your parable, and prophecy as much good concerning me and my affairs.—Not one of my letters has got to Mrs. Sterne since the notification of her intentions, which has a pitiful air on my side, though I have wrote her six or seven.—I imagine she will be here the latter end of September, though I have no date for it, but her impatience, which, having suffered by my supposed silence, I am persuaded will make her fear the worst—if that is the case, she will fly to England—a most natural conclusion.—You did

well to discontinue all commerce with James's powders—as you are so well, rejoice therefore, and let your heart be merry—mine ought upon the same score—for I never have been so well since I left college—and should be a marvellous happy man, but for some reflections which bow down my spirits—but if I live but even three or four years, I will acquit myself with honour—and—no matter! we will talk this over when we meet.—If all ends as temperately as with you, and that I find grace, &c. &c., I will come and sing *Te Deum*, or drink *poculum elevatum*, or do any thing with you in the world.—I should depend upon G—'s critic upon my head, as much, as Moliere's old woman upon his comedies—when you do not want her society, let it be carried into your bed-chamber to flay her, or clap it upon her bum—to—and give her my blessing as you do it—

My postillion has set me a-ground for a week, by one of my pistols bursting in his hand, which he taking for granted

to be quite shot off—he instantly fell upon his knees and said (Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name) at which, like a good Christian, he stopped, not remembering any more of it—the affair was not so bad as he at first thought, for it has only *bursten* two of his fingers (he says).—I long to return to you, but I sit here alone as solitary and sad as a tom cat, which by the bye is all the company I keep—he follows me from the parlour, to the kitchen, into the garden, and every place—I wish I had a dog—my daughter will bring me one—and so God be about you, and strengthen your faith—I am affectionately, dear cousin, yours,

L. S.

My service to the C——, though they are from home, and to Panty.

L E T T E R C V.

TO MR. AND MRS. J.

Coxwoud, August 13, 1767.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I BUT copy your great civility to me in writing you word, that I have this moment received another letter wrote eighteen days after the date of the last from St. Jago—If our poor friend could have wrote another letter to England, you would in course have had it—but I fear, from the circumstance of great hurry and bodily disorder in which she was, when she dispatched this, she might not have time.—In case it has so fallen out, I send you the contents of what I have received—and that is a melancholy history of herself and sufferings, since they left St. Jago—continual and most violent rheumatism all the time—a fever

brought on with fits, and attended with delirium, and every terrifying symptom—the recovery from this left her low and emaciated to a skeleton.—I give you the pain of this detail with a bleeding heart, knowing how much at the same time it will affect yours.—The three or four last days of our journal leave us with hopes she will do well at last, for she is more cheerful—and seems to be getting into better spirits; and health will follow in course. They have crossed the line—are much becalmed, by which, with other delays, she fears they will lose their passage to Madras—and be some months sooner for it at Bombay.—Heaven protect her, for she suffers much, and with uncommon fortitude.—She writes much to me about her dear friend Mrs. J—— in her last packet.—In truth, my good lady, she loves and honours you from her heart; but, if she did not, I should not esteem her, or wish her so well as I do, —Adieu, my dear friends—you

have few in the world more truly and cordially

Yours.

L. STERNE.

P. S. I have just received, as a present from a man I shall ever love, a most elegant gold snuff-box, fabricated for me at Paris—'tis not the first pledge I have received of his friendship.—May I presume to inclose you a letter of chit-chat which I shall write to Eliza? I know you will write yourself, and my letter may have the honour to *chaperon* yours to India—they will neither of them be the worse received for going together in company, but I fear they will get late in the year to their destined port, as they go first to Bengal.

L E T T E R C V I.

TO MISS STERNE.

Coxwold, August 24, 1767.

I AM truly surpris'd, my dear Lydia, that my last letter has not reached thy mother, and thyself—it looks most unkind on my part, after your having wrote me word of your mother's intention of coming to England, that she has not received my letter to welcome you both—and though in that I said I wished you would defer your journey till March, for before that time I should have published my sentimental work, and should be in town to receive you—yet I will shew you more real politeffes than any you have met with in France, as mine will come warm from the heart.—I am sorry you are not here at the races, but *les fêtes champêtres* of the Marquis de Sade have made you amends.—I know B—— very well, and he is what in France would be

called admirable—that would be but so so here—You are right—he studies nature more than any, or rather most of the French comedians—If the Empress of Russia pays him and his wife a pension of twenty thousand livres a year, I think he is very well off.—The folly of staying till after twelve for supper—that you two excommunicated beings might have meat!—“his conscience would not let it be served before.”—Surely the Marquis thought you both, being English, could not be satisfied without it.—I would have given, not my gown and cassock (for I have but one), but my topaz ring, to have seen the *petits maîtres et maîtresses* go to mass, after having spent the night in dancing.—As to my pleasures, they are few in compass.—My poor cat sits purring beside me—your lively French dog shall have his place on the other side of my fire—but if he is as devilish as when I last saw him, I must tutor him, for I will not have my cat abused—in short, I will have nothing devilish

about me—a combustion will spoil a sentimental thought.

Another thing I must desire—do not be alarmed—'tis to throw all your rouge pots into the Sorgue before you set out—I will have no rouge put on in England—and do not bewail them as ——— did her silver seringue or glister equipage which she lost in a certain river—but take a wise resolution of doing without rouge.—I have been three days ago bad again—with a spitting of blood—and that unfeeling brute ***** came and drew my curtains, and with a voice like a trumpet, halloo'd in my ear—Z—ds, what a fine kettle of fish have you brought yourself to, Mr. S——! In a faint voice, I bad him leave me, for comfort sure was never administered in so rough a manner.—Tell your mother, I hope she will purchase what either of you may want at Paris—'tis an occasion not to be lost—so write to me from Paris, that I may come and meet you in my post-chaise with my long-tailed horses—and

the moment you have both put your feet in it, call it hereafter yours.—Adieu, dear Lydia—believe me, what, I ever shall be,

Your affectionate father,

L. STERNE.

I think I shall not write to Avignon any more, but you will find one for you at Paris—once more adieu.

LETTER CVII.

TO SIR W.

MY DEAR SIR,

September 19, 1767.

You are perhaps the drollest being in the universe—Why do you banter me so about what I wrote to you?—Tho' I told you, every morning I jump'd into Venus's lap (meaning thereby the sea) was you to infer from that, that I leap'd into the ladies beds afterwards?—The body guides you—the mind me.—I have

wrote the most whimsical letter to a lady that was ever read, and talked of body and soul too—I said she had made me vain, by saying she was mine more than ever woman was—but she is not the lady of Bond-street, nor ——— square, nor the lady who supped with me in Bond-street on scolloped oysters, and other such things—nor did she ever go *tête-à-tête* with me to Salt Hill.—Enough of such nonsense—The past is over—and I can justify myself unto myself—can you do as much?—No, 'faith!—"You can feel!" Aye, so can my cat, when he hears a female caterwauling on the house-top—but caterwauling disgusts me. I had rather raise a gentle flame, than have a different one raised in me.—Now I take heaven to witness, after all this *badi-nage*, my heart is innocent—and the sporting of my pen is equal, just equal, to what I did in my boyish days, when I got astride of a stick, and galloped away—The truth is this—that my pen governs me—not me my pen.—You

are much to blame if you dig for marle, unless you are sure of it. I was once such a puppy myself, as to pare, and burn, and had my labour for my pains, and two hundred pounds out of pocket. *C*Curse on farming (said I), I will try if the pen will not succeed better than the spade. The following up of that affair (I mean farming) made me lose my temper, and a cart load of turnips was (I thought) very dear at two hundred pounds.

In all your operations may your own good sense guide you—bought experience is the devil.—Adieu, adieu!—Believe me

Yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

LETTER CVIII.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

Coxwold, Sept. 27, 1767.

YOU are arrived at Scarborough when all the world has left it—but you are an unaccountable being, and so there is nothing more to be said on the matter—You wish me to come to Scarborough, and join you to read a work that is not yet finished—besides, I have other things in my head.—My wife will be here in three or four days, and I must not be found straying in the wilderness—but I have been there. As for meeting you at Bluit's, with all my heart—I will laugh, and drink my barley-water with you. As soon as I have greeted my wife and daughter, and hired them a house at York, I shall go to London, where you generally are in Spring—and then my Sentimental Journey will, I dare say, convince you that my feelings are from the heart, and

that that heart is not of the worst of moulds—praised be God for my sensibility! Though it has often made me wretched, yet I would not exchange it for all the pleasures the grossest sensualist ever felt. Write to me the day you will be at York—'tis ten to one but I may introduce you to my wife and daughter. Believe me,

My good Sir,

Ever yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CIX.

TO MR. PANCHAUD, AT PARIS.

DEAR SIR,

York, October 1, 1767.

I HAVE order'd my friend Becket to advance for two months your account which my wife this day deliver'd—she is in raptures with all your civilities.—This is to give you notice to draw upon your correspondent—and Becket will deduct out of my publication.—

To-morrow morning I repair with her to Coxwold, and my Lydia seems transported with the sight of me.—Nature, dear P——, breathes in all her composition; and except a little vivacity—which is a fault in the world we live in—I am fully content with her mother's care of her.—Pardon this digression from business—but 'tis natural to speak of those we love.—As to the subscriptions which your friendship has procured me, I must have them to incorporate with my lists which are to be prefix'd to the first volume.—My wife and daughter join in millions of thanks—they will leave me the 1st of December.—Adieu, adieu!—Believe me

Yours, most truly,

L. STERNE.

LETTER CX.

TO MR. AND MRS. J——.

Coxwold, October 3, 1767.

I HAVE suffered under a strong desire for above this fortnight, to send a letter of enquiries after the health and the well-being of my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. J——; and I do assure you both, 'twas merely owing to a little modesty in my temper not to make my good-will troublesome, where I have so much, and to those I never think of, but with ideas of sensibility and obligation, that I have refrain'd. —Good God! to think I could be in town, and not go the first step I made to Gerrard Street!—My mind and body must be at sad variance with each other, should it ever fall out that it is not both the first and last place also where I shall betake myself, were it only to say, “God bless you”—May you have every blessing he can send you! 'tis a

part of my litany, where you will always have a place whilst I have a tongue to repeat it—And so you heard I had left Scarborough, which you would no more credit, than the reasons assign'd for it—I thank you for it kindly—tho' you have not told me what they were; being a shrewd divine, I think I can guess.—I was ten days at Scarborough in September, and was hospitably entertained by one of the best of our Bishops; who, as he kept house there, press'd me to be with him—and his household consisted of a gentleman, and two ladies—which with the good Bishop and myself, made so good a party that we kept much to ourselves.—I made in this time a connection of great friendship with my mitred host, who would gladly have taken me with him back to Ireland.—However, we all left Scarborough together, and lay fifteen miles off, where we kindly parted—Now it was supposed (and have since heard) that I e'en went on with the party

to London, and this I suppose was the reason assign'd for my being there.—I dare say charity would add a little to the account, and give out that 'twas on the score of one, and perhaps both of the ladies—and I will excuse charity on that head, for a heart disengaged could not well have done better.—I have been hard writing ever since—and hope by Christmas I shall be able to give a gentle rap at your door—and tell you how happy I am to see my two good friends.—I assure you I spur on my Pegasus more violently upon that account, and am now determined not to draw bit, till I have finished this Sentimental Journey—which I hope to lay at your feet, as a small (but a very honest) testimony of the constant truth with which I am,

My dear friends,

Your ever obliged

And grateful

L. STERNE,

P. S. My wife and daughter arrived here last night from France.—My girl has return'd an elegant accomplish'd little slut—my wife—but I hate to praise my wife—'tis as much as decency will allow to praise my daughter.—I suppose they will return next summer to France.—They leave me in a month to reside at York for the winter—and I stay at Coxwold till the first of January.

L E T T E R CXI.

TO MRS. F——.

DEAR MADAM,

Coxwold, Friday.

I RETURN you a thousand thanks for your obliging enquiry after me—I got down last summer very much worn out—and much worse at the end of my journey—I was forced to call at his Grace's house (the Archbishop of York) to refresh myself a couple of days upon the road near Doncaster—Since I got home to quietness, and tem-

perance, and good books, and good hours, I have mended—and am now very stout—and in a fortnight's time shall perhaps be as well as you yourself could wish me.—I have the pleasure to acquaint you that my wife and daughter are arrived from France—I shall be in town to greet my friends by the first of January.—Adieu, dear madam—Believe me

Yours sincerely,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXII.

TO MRS. H.

Coxwold, October 12, 1767.

EVER since my dear H. wrote me word she was mine, more than ever woman was, I have been racking my memory to inform me where it was that you and I had that affair together.—People think that I have had many, some in body, some in mind; but as I told

you before, you have had me more than any woman—therefore you must have had me, H——, both in mind, and in body.—Now I cannot recollect where it was, nor exactly when—it could not be the lady in Bond-street, or Grosvenor-street, or ——— Square, or Pall-mall.—We shall make it out, H. when we meet—I impatiently long for it—'tis no matter—I cannot now stand writing to you to-day—I will make it up next post—for dinner is upon table, and if I make Lord F—— stay, he will not frank this.—How do you do? Which parts of Tristram do you like best?—God bless you.

Yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXIII.

TO MR. AND MRS. J——.

Coxwould, November 12, 1767.

FOR GIVE me, dear Mrs. J——, if I am troublesome in writing something betwixt a letter and a card, to enquire after you and my good friend Mr. J——, whom 'tis an age since I have heard a syllable of.—I think so, however, and never more felt the want of a house I esteem so much, as I do now when I can hear tidings of it so seldom—and have nothing to recompense my desires of seeing its kind possessors, but the hopes before me of doing it by Christmas.—I long sadly to see you—and my friend Mr. J——, I am still at Coxwould—my wife and girl* here,—She is a dear good creature

* Mrs. Medalle thinks an apology may be necessary for publishing this Letter—the best she can offer is—that it was written by a fond parent

—affectionate, and most elegant in body, and mind—she is all heaven could give me in a daughter—but like other blessings, not given, but lent; for her mother loves France—and this dear part of me must be torn from my arms, to follow her mother, who seems inclined to establish her in France, where she has had many advantageous offers.—Do not smile at my weakness, when I say I don't wonder at it, for she is as accomplish'd a slut as France can produce.—You shall excuse all this — if you won't, I desire Mr. J—— to be my advocate—but I know I don't want one.—With what pleasure shall I embrace your dear little pledge—whom I hope to see every hour increasing in stature, and in favour, both with God and man!—I kiss all your hands with a most devout and friendly heart.—No man can wish you more good than your

(whose commendations she is proud of) to a very sincere friend.

meagre friend does—few so much, for I am with infinite cordiality, gratitude, and honest affection,

My dear Mrs. J——,

Your ever faithful

L. STERNE.

P. S. My Sentimental Journey will please Mrs. J——, and my Lydia—I can answer for those two. It is a subject which works well, and suits the frame of mind I have been in for some time past—I told you my design in it was to teach us to love the world and our fellow-creatures better than we do—so it runs most upon those gentler passions and affections, which aid so much to it. Adieu, and may you and my worthy friend Mr. J—— continue examples of the doctrine I teach!

L E T T E R CXIV.

TO MRS. H.

Coxwoud, Nov. 15, 1767.

Now be a good dear woman, my H——, and execute these commissions well—and when I see you I will give you a kifs—there's for you!—But I have something else for you which I am fabricating at a great rate, and that is my Sentimental Journey, which shall make you cry as much as it has affected me—or I will give up the business of sentimental writing—and write to the body—that is, H. what I am doing in writing to you—but you are a *good body*, which is worth half a score mean souls.—

I am yours, &c. &c.

L. SHANDY.

L E T T E R CXV.

TO A. L—E, ESQ.

Coxwould, November 19, 1767.

You make yourself unhappy, dear L—e, by imaginary ills—which you might shun, instead of putting yourself in the way of.—Would not any man in his senses fly from the object he adores, and not waste his time and his health in increasing his misery by so vain a pursuit?—The idol of your heart is one of ten thousand.—The Duke of — has long sighed in vain—and can you suppose a woman will listen to you, that is proof against titles, stars, and red ribands?—Her heart (believe me, L—e) will not be taken in by fine men, or fine speeches—if it should ever feel a preference, it will chuse an object for itself, and it must be a singular character that can make an impression on such a being—she has a

platonick way of thinking, and knows love only by name—the natural reserve of her character, which you complain of, proceeds not from pride, but from a superiority of understanding, which makes her despise every man that turns himself into a fool—Take my advice, and pay your addresses to Miss ——; she esteems you, and time will wear off an attachment which has taken so deep a root in your heart.—I pity you from my soul—but we are all born with passions which ebb and flow (else they would play the devil with us) to different objects—and the best advice I can give you, L——e, is to turn the tide of yours another way.—I know not whether I shall write again while I stay at Coxwold.—I am in earnest at my sentimental work—and intend being in town soon after Christmas—in the mean time adieu.—Let me hear from you, and believe me, dear L.

Yours, &c.

L. STERNE.

LETTER CXVI.

TO THE EARL OF ———.

Coxwould, November 28, 1767.

MY LORD,

TIS with the greatest pleasure I take my pen to thank your Lordship for your letter of enquiry about Yorick—he has worn out both his spirits and body with the Sentimental Journey—'tis true that an author must feel himself, or his reader will not—but I have torn my whole frame into pieces by my feelings—I believe the brain stands as much in need of recruiting as the body—therefore I shall set out for town the twentieth of next month, after having recruited myself a week at York. I might indeed solace myself with my wife (who is come from France), but in fact I have long been a sentimental being—whatever your Lordship may think to the contrary.

The world has imagined, because I wrote Tristram Shandy, that I was myself more Shandean than I really ever was—'tis a good-natured world we live in, and we are often painted in divers colours according to the ideas each one frames in his head.——A very agreeable lady arrived three years ago at York, in her road to Scarborough—I had the honour of being acquainted with her, and was her *chaperon*—all the females were very inquisitive to know who she was—"Do not tell, ladies, 'tis a mistress my wife has recommended to me—nay moreover has sent her from France."——

I hope my book will please you, my Lord, and then my labour will not be totally in vain. If it is not thought a chaste book, mercy on them that read it, for they must have warm imaginations indeed!—Can your Lordship forgive my not making this

a longer epistle?—In short, I can but add this, which you already know—that I am with gratitude and friendship,

My Lord,

Your obedient faithful,

L. STERNE.

If your Lordship is in town in Spring, I should be happy if you became acquainted with my friends in Gerrard-street—you would esteem the husband, and honour the wife—she is the reverse of most of her sex—they have various pursuits—she but one—that of pleasing her husband.—

L E T T E R CXVII.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY SIR G. M.

Coxwold, December 3, 1767.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

FOR tho' you are his Excellency, and I still but parson Yorick—I still must call you so—and were you to be next Emperor of Russia, I could not write to you, or speak of you, under any other relation—I felicitate you, I don't say how much, because I can't—I always had something like a kind of revelation within me, which pointed out this track for you, in which you are so happily advanced—it was not only my wishes for you, which were ever ardent enough to impose upon a visionary brain, but I thought I actually saw you just where you now are—and that is just, my dear Macartney, where you should be.—I should long, long ago have acknowledged the kindness

of a letter of yours from Petersbourg ; but hearing daily accounts you was leaving it—this is the first time I knew well *where* my thanks would find you—how they will find you, I know well—that is—the same I ever knew you. In three weeks I shall kiss your hand—and sooner, if I can finish my Sentimental Journey.—The deuce take all sentiments ! I wish there was not one in the world !—My wife is come to pay me a sentimental visit as far as from Avignon—and the *politesse* arising from such a proof of her urbanity has robb'd me of a month's writing, or I had been in town now.—I am going to lye-in ; being at Christmas at my full reckoning—and unless what I shall bring forth is not *press'd* to death by these devils of printers, I shall have the honour of presenting to you a *couple of as clean brats* as ever chaste brain conceiv'd—they are frolicksome too, *mais cela n'empeche pas*—I put your name down with many wrong and right *honourables*, knowing you would

take it not well if I did not make myself happy with it.

Adieu, my dear friend,

Believe me yours, &c.

L. STERNE.

P. S. If you see Mr. Crawford, tell him I greet him kindly.

L E T T E R CXVIII.

TO A. L——E, ESQ.

DEAR L. Coxwoud December 7, 1767.

I SAID I would not perhaps write any more, but it would be unkind not to reply to so interesting a letter as yours—I am certain you may depend upon Lord ——'s promises—he will take care of you in the best manner he can, and your knowledge of the world, and of languages in particular, will make you useful in any department—If his Lordship's scheme does not succeed, leave the kingdom—go to the east, or the west, for travelling would be of infinite service to

both your body and mind—But more of this when we meet—now to my own affairs.—I have had an offer of exchanging two pieces of preferment I hold here, for a living of three hundred and fifty pounds a year in Surry, about thirty miles from London, and retaining Coxwold, and my prebendaryship—the country also is sweet—but I will not, cannot come to any determination, till I have consulted with you, and my other friends.—I have great offers too in Ireland—the bishops of C—— and R—— are both my friends—but I have rejected every proposal, unless Mrs. S—— and my Lydia could accompany me thither—I live for the sake of my girl, and, with her sweet light burthen in my arms, I could get up fast the hill of preferment, if I chose it—but without my Lydia, if a mitre was offered me, it would sit uneasy upon my brow.—Mrs. S——'s health is insupportable in England.—She must return to France, and justice and humanity forbid me to oppose it.—I will allow her enough to

live comfortably, until she can rejoin me.—My heart bleeds, L—e, when I think of parting with my child——’twill be like the separation of soul and body—and equal to nothing but what passes at that tremendous moment; and like it in one respect, for she will be in one kingdom, whilst I am in another.—You will laugh at my weakness—but I cannot help it—for she is a dear disinterested girl—As a proof of it—when she left Coxwould, and I bad her adieu, I pulled out my purse and offered her ten guineas for her private pleasures—her answer was pretty, and affected me too much: “No, my dear papa, our expences of coming from France may have straitened you—I would rather put an hundred guineas in your pocket than take ten out of it.”—I burst into tears—but why do I practise on your feelings—by dwelling on a subject that will touch your heart?—It is too much melted already by its own sufferings, L—e, for me to add a pang, or cause a single sigh.—God bless you—I shall hope to

greet you by New-year's-day in perfect health—Adieu, my dear friend—I am most truly and cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXIX.

TO J—H—S—, ESQ.

[December, 1767.]

LITERAS vestras lepidissimas, mi consobrine, consobrinis meis omnibus carior, accepi die Veneris; sed postea non rediebat versus Aquilonem eo die, aliter scripsissem prout desiderabas. Nescio quid est materia cum me, sed sum fatigatus & ægrotus de meâ uxore plus quam unquam—& sum possessus cum diabolo qui pellet me in urbem—& tu es possessus cum eodem malo spiritu qui te tenet in deserto esse tentatum ancillis tuis, et perturbatum uxore tuâ—crede mihi, mi Antoni, quod isthæc non est via ad salutem sive hodiernam, sive eternam; num tu incipis cogitare de pecu-

niâ, quæ, ut ait Sanctus Paulus, est radix omnium malorum, & non fatis dicis in corde tuo, ego Antonius de Castello Infirmo, sum jam quadraginta & plus annos natus, & explevi octavum meum lustrum, et tempus est me curare, & meipsum Antonium facere hominem felicem & liberum, et mihimet ipsi benefacere, ut exhortatur Solomon, qui dicit quòd nihil est melius in hâc vitâ, quàm quòd homo vivat festivè, & quòd edat et bibat, & bono fruatur, quia hoc est sua portio & dos in hoc mundo.

Nunc te scire vellemus, quòd non debeo esse reprehendi pro festinando eundo ad Londinum, quia Deus est testis, quòd non propero præ gloria, & pro me ostendere; nam diabolus iste qui me intravit, non est diabolus vanus, at consobrinus suus Lucifer—sed est diabolus amabundus, qui non vult sinere me esse solum; nam cùm non cumbendo cum uxore meâ, sum mentulatiores quàm par est—& sum mortaliter in amore—& sum fatuus; ergo tu me, mi care Antoni, excusabis, quoniam tu fuisti in

amore, & per mare & per terras ivisti & festinasti sicut diabolus, eodem te propellente diabolo. Habeo multa ad te scribere—sed scribo hanc epistolam in domo coffeatoriâ & plenâ sociorum strepitosorum, qui non permittent me cogitare unam cogitationem.

Saluta amicum Panty meum, cujus literis respondebo—saluta amicos in domo Gifbrosensi, & oro, credas me vinculo consobrinitalis & amoris ad te, mi Antoni, devinctissimum,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXX.

TO MR. AND MRS. J.

York, December 23, 1767.

I WAS afraid that either Mr. or Mrs. J—, or their little blossom was drooping—or that some of you were ill, by not having the pleasure of a line from you, and was thinking of writing

again to inquire after you all——when I was cast down myself with a fever, and bleeding at my lungs, which had confined me to my room near three weeks——when I had the favour of yours, which till to-day I have not been able to thank you both kindly for, as I most cordially now do—as well as for all your professions and proofs of good-will to me.—I will not say I have not balanced accounts with you in this—All I know is, that I honour and value you more than I do any good creatures upon earth—and that I could not wish your happiness, and the success of whatever conduces to it, more than I do, was I your brother—but, good God! are we not all brothers and sisters, who are friendly, virtuous, and good? Surely, my dear friends, my illness has been a sort of sympathy for your afflictions upon the score of your dear little one.—I am worn down to a shadow; but, as my fever has left me, I set off the latter end of next week with my friend Mr. Hall for town—I need not tell my friends in Gerrard-

street, I shall do myself the honour to visit them, before either Lord —— or Lord ——, &c. &c.—I thank you, my dear friend, for what you say so kindly about my daughter—it shews your good heart, for as she is a stranger, 'tis a free gift in you—but when she is known to you, she shall win it fairly—but, alas! when this event is to happen, is in the clouds. Mrs. S— has hired a house ready furnished at York, till she returns to France, and my Lydia must not leave her.

What a sad scratch of a letter!—but I am weak, my dear friends, both in body and mind—so God bless you—you will see me enter like a ghost—so I tell you before-hand not to be frightened.—I am, my dear friends, with the truest attachment and esteem, ever yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Old Bond-street, January 1 [1768].

NOT knowing whether the moisture of the weather will permit me to give my kind friends in Gerrard-street a call this morning for five minutes—I beg leave to send them all the good wishes, compliments, and respects I owe them.—I continue to mend, and doubt not but this, with all other evils and uncertainties of life, will end for the best.—I send all compliments to your fire-sides this Sunday night—Miss Ascough the wife, Miss Pigot the witty, your daughter the pretty, and so on.—If Lord O—— is with you, I beg my dear Mrs. J—— will present the inclosed to him —'twill add to the millions of obligations I already owe you.—I am sorry that I am no subscriber to Soho this season—it deprives me of a pleasure worth

twice the subscription—but I am just going to send about this quarter of the town, to see if it is not too late to procure a ticket, undisposed of, from some of my Soho friends; and if I can succeed, I will either send or wait upon you with it by half an hour after three to-morrow—if not, my friend will do me the justice to believe me truly miserable,—I am half engaged, or more, for dinner on Sunday next, but will try to get disengaged in order to be with my friends.—If I cannot, I will glide like a shadow uninvited to Gerrard-street some day this week, that we may eat our bread and meat in love and peace together.—God bless you both!—I am with the most sincere regard,

Your ever obliged

L. STERNE.

LETTER CXXII:

TO THE SAME.

Old Bond-street, Monday.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I HAVE never been a moment at rest since I wrote yesterday about this Soho ticket—I have been at a Secretary of State to get one—have been upon one knee to my friends Sir G—— M——, Mr. Lascelles—and Mr. Fitzmaurice——without mentioning five more——I believe I could as soon get you a place at court, for every body is going—but I will go out and try a new circle—and if you do not hear from me by a quarter after three, you may conclude I have been unfortunate in my supplications.—I send you this state of the affair, lest my silence should make you think I had neglected what I promised—but no—Mrs. J—— knows me better, and

would never suppose it would be out of the head of one who is with so much truth

Her faithful friend,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Thursday, Old Bond-street.

A THOUSAND thanks, and as many excuses, my dear friends, for the trouble my blunder has given you. By a second note I am astonished I could read Saturday for Sunday, or make any mistake in a card wrote by Mrs. J—s, in which my friend is as unrivalled, as in a hundred greater excellencies.

I am now tied down neck and heels (twice over) by engagements every day this week, or most joyfully would have trod the old pleasing road from Bond to

Gerrard-street.—My books will be to be had on Thursday, but possibly on Wednesday in the afternoon.—I am quite well, but exhausted with a room full of company every morning till dinner—How do I lament I cannot eat my morsel (which is always sweet) with such kind friends!—The Sunday following I will assuredly wait upon you both—and will come a quarter before four, that I may have both a little time and a little day-light, to see Mrs. J———'s picture.—I beg leave to assure my friends of my gratitude for all their favours, with my sentimental thanks for every token of their good will.—Adieu, my dear friends—

I am truly yours,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXXIV.

FROM DR. EUSTACE, IN AMERICA, TO
THE REV. MR. STERNE, WITH A
WALKING-STICK.

SIR,

WHEN I assure you that I am a great admirer of Tristram Shandy, and have, ever since his introduction into the world, been one of his most zealous defenders against the repeated assaults of prejudice and misapprehension, I hope you will not treat this unexpected appearance in his company as an intrusion.

You know it is an observation, as remarkable for its truth as for its antiquity, that a similitude of sentiments is the general parent of friendship.—It cannot be wondered at, that I should conceive an esteem for a person whom nature had most indulgently enabled to frisk and curvet with ease through all these intri-

cacies of sentiments, which, from irresistible propensity, she had impelled me to trudge through without merit or distinction.

The only reason that gave rise to this address to you, is my accidentally having met with a piece of true Shandean statuary, I mean, according to vulgar opinion, for to such judges both appear equally destitute of regularity or design.—It was made by a very ingenious gentleman of this province, and presented to the late Governor Dobbs; after his death Mrs. D. gave it me: its singularity made many desirous of procuring it; but I had resolved at first not to part with it, till, upon reflection, I thought it would be a very proper, and probably not an unacceptable, compliment to my favourite author, and in his hands might prove as ample a field for meditation, as a button-hole, or a broomstick.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

L E T T E R CXXV.

MR. STERNE'S ANSWER.

SIR,

London, Feb. 9, 1768.

I THIS moment received your obliging letter, and Shandean piece of sculpture along with it, of both which testimonies of your regard I have the justest sense, and return you, dear Sir, my best thanks and acknowledgment. Your walking-stick is in no sense more Shandaick than in that of its having more handles than one; the parallel breaks only in this, that, in using the stick, every one will take the handle which suits his convenience. In Tristram Shandy, the handle is taken which suits the passions, their ignorance, or their sensibility. There is so little true feeling in the herd of the world, that I wish I could have got an act of parliament, when the books first appeared, that none but wise men should look into

them. It is too much to write books, and find heads to understand them; the world, however, seems to come into a better temper about them, the people of genius here being to a man on its side; and the reception it has met with in France, Italy, and Germany, has engaged one part of the world to give it a second reading. The other, in order to be on the strongest side, has at length agreed to speak well of it too. A few hypocrites and Tartuffes, whose approbation could do it nothing but dishonour, remain unconverted.

I am very proud, Sir, to have had a man like you on my side from the beginning; but it is not in the power of every one to taste humour, however he may wish it; it is the gift of God; and, besides, a true feeler always brings half the entertainment along with him; his own ideas are only called forth by what he reads, and the vibrations within him entirely correspond with those excited.—'Tis like reading himself—and not the book.

In a week's time I shall be delivered of two volumes of the Sentimental Travels of Mr. Yorick through France and Italy ; but, alas ! the ship sails three days too soon, and I have but to lament it deprives me of the pleasure of presenting them to you.

Believe me, dear Sir, with great thanks for the honour you have done me, with true esteem,

Your obliged humble servant,

LAURENCE STERNE.

L E T T E R CXXVI.

TO L. S—N, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Old Bond-Street, Wednesday.

YOUR commendations are very flattering. I know no one whose judgment I think more highly of, but your partiality for me is the only instance in which I can call it in question.
—Thanks, my good Sir, for the prints
—I am much your debtor for them—

if I recover from my ill state of health, and live to revisit Coxwold this summer, I will decorate my study with them along, with six beautiful pictures I have already of the sculptures on poor Ovid's tomb, which were executed on marble at Rome.—It grieves one to think such a man should have died in exile, who wrote so well on the art of love.—Do not think me encroaching if I solicit a favour—'tis either to borrow, or beg (to beg if you please) some of those touched with chalk which you brought from Italy—I believe you have three sets, and if you can spare the imperfect one of cattle on colour'd paper, 'twill answer my purpose, which is namely this, to give a friend of ours.—You may be ignorant she has a genius for drawing, and whatever she excels in she conceals, and her humility adds lustre to her accomplishments—I presented her last year with colours, and an apparatus for painting, and gave her several lessons before I left town.—I wish her to follow

this art, to be a complete mistress of it—and it is singular enough, but not more singular than true, that she does not know how to make a cow or a sheep, tho' she draws figures and landscapes perfectly well; which makes me wish her to copy from good prints. —If you come to town next week, and dine where I am engaged next Sunday, call upon me and take me with you—I breakfast with Mr. Beauclerc, and am engaged for an hour afterwards with Lord O——; so let our meeting be either at your house or my lodgings—do not be late, for we will go half an hour before dinner, to see a picture executed by West, most admirably—he has caught the character of our friend—such goodness is painted in that face, that when one looks at it, let the soul be ever so much unharmonized, it is impossible it should remain so.—I will send you a set of my books—they will take with the generality—the women will read this book in the parlour, and

Tristram in the bed-chamber.—Good night, dear Sir—I am going to take my whey, and then to bed. Believe me

Yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXXVII.

TO MISS STERNE.

February 20, Old Bond Street.

MY DEAREST LYDIA,

M^Y Sentimental Journey, you say, is admired in York by every one—and 'tis not vanity in me to tell you that it is no less admired here—but what is the gratification of my feelings on this occasion?—The want of health bows me down, and vanity harbours not in thy father's breast—this vile influenza—be not alarm'd, I think I shall get the better of it—and shall be with you both the first of May; and if I escape, 'twill not be for a long pe-

riod, my child—unless a quiet retreat and peace of mind can restore me.—The subject of thy letter has astonish'd me.—Se could but know little of my feelings, to tell thee, that under the supposition I should survive thy mother, I should bequeath thee as a legacy to ——. No, my Lydia! 'tis a lady, whose virtues I wish thee to imitate, that I shall entrust my girl to—I mean that friend whom I have so often talk'd and wrote about—from her you will learn to be an affectionate wife, a tender mother, and a sincere friend—and you cannot be intimate with her, without her pouring some part of the milk of human kindness into your breast, which will serve to check the heat of your own temper, which you partake in a small degree of.—Nor will that amiable woman put my Lydia under the painful necessity to fly to India for protection, whilst it is in her power to grant her a more powerful one in England.—But I think, my Ly-

dia, that thy mother will survive me—do not deject her spirits with thy apprehensions on my account.—I have sent you a necklace, buckles, and the same to your mother.—My girl cannot form a wish that is in the power of her father, that he will not gratify her in—and I cannot in justice be less kind to thy mother.—I am never alone——The kindness of my friends is ever the same—I wish tho' I had thee to nurse me—but I am deny'd that.—Write to me twice a week, at least.—God bless thee, my child; and believe me ever, ever thy

Affectionate father,

L. S.

L E T T E R CXXVIII.

TO MRS. J——.

Tuesday.

YOUR poor friend is scarce able to write—he has been at death's door this week with a pleurisy—I was bled three times on Thursday, and blister'd on Friday—The physician says I am better—God knows, for I feel myself sadly wrong, and shall, if I recover, be a long while of gaining strength.—Before I have gone thro' half this letter, I must stop to rest my weak hand above a dozen times.—Mr. J—— was so good to call upon me yesterday. I felt emotions not to be described at the sight of him, and he overjoy'd me by talking a great deal of you.—Do, dear Mrs. J——, entreat him to come to-morrow, or next day, for perhaps I have not many days, or hours, to live—I want to ask a favour of him, if I find myself worse—that I shall beg of

you, if in this wrestling I come off conqueror—my spirits are fled—'tis a bad omen—do not weep, my dear Lady—your tears are too precious to shed for me—bottle them up, and may the cork never be drawn.—Dearest, kindest, gentlest, and best of women! may health, peace, and happiness prove your handmaids!—If I die, cherish the remembrance of me, and forget the follies which you so often condemn'd—which my heart, not my head, betrayed me into. Should my child, my Lydia want a mother, may I hope you will (if she is left parentless) take her to your bosom?—You are the only woman on earth I can depend upon for such a benevolent action.—I wrote to her a fortnight ago*, and told her what I trust she will find in you.—Mr. J—— will be a father to her—he will protect her from every insult, for he wears a sword which he has

* From this circumstance it may be conjectured, that this Letter was written on Tuesday the 8th of March 1768, ten days before Mr. Sterne died.

served his country with, and which he would know how to draw out of the scabbard in defence of innocence—Commend me to him—as I now commend you to that Being who takes under his care the good and kind part of the world.—Adieu—All grateful thanks to you and Mr. J——,

Your poor affectionate friend,

L. STERNE.

L E T T E R CXXIX.

TO * * * * *

I BEHELD her tender look—her pathetic eye petrified my fluids—the liquid dissolution drowned those once-bright orbs—the late sympathetic features, so pleasing in their harmony, are now blasted—withered—and are dead;—her charms are dwindled into a melancholy which demands my pity.—Yes—my friend—our once sprightly and vivacious Harriot is that very ob-

ject that must thrill your soul.—How abandoned is that heart which bulges the tear of innocence, and is the cause—the fatal cause of overwhelming the spotless soul, and plunging the yet-untainted mind into a sea of sorrow and repentance—Though born to protect the fair, does not man act the part of a Demon?—first alluring by his temptations, and then triumphing in his victory—when villany gets the ascendancy, it seldom leaves the wretch 'till it has thoroughly polluted him

——T*****, once the joyous companion of our juvenile extravagances, by a deep-laid scheme, so far ingratiated himself into the good graces of the old man—that even he, with all his penetration and experience (of which old folks generally pique themselves), could not perceive his drift, and, like the goodness of his own heart, believed him honourable:—had I known his pretensions—I would have flown on the wings of friendship—of regard—of affection—

and rescued the lovely innocent from the hands of the spoiler:—be not alarmed at my declaration—I have been long bound to her in the reciprocal bonds of affection; but it is of a more delicate stamp than the gross materials nature has planted in us for procreation—I hope ever to retain the idea of innocence, and love her still:—I would love the whole sex were they equally deserving.

— — — taking her by the hand — the other thrown round her waist—after an intimacy allowing such freedoms — with a look deceitfully pleasing, the villain poured out a torrent of protestations—and though oaths are sacred—swore with all the fortitude of a conscientious man—the depth of his love—the height of his esteem—the strength of his attachment;—by these, and other artful means to answer his abandoned purpose (for which you know he is but too well qualified)—gained on the open inexperienced heart of the generous Harriot, and robbed her of

her brightest jewel.—Oh, England! where are your senators?—where are your laws?—Ye Heavens! where rests your deadly thunder?—why are your bolts restrained from o'erwhelming with vengeance this vile seducer?—I,—my friend,—I, was the minister sent by justice to revenge her wrongs—revenge—I disclaim it—to redress her wrongs.—The news of affliction flies—I heard it, and posted to ****, where, forgetting my character—this is the style of the enthusiast—it most became my character—I saw him in his retreat—I flew out of the chaise—caught him by the collar—and in a tumult of passion—demanded:—sure, if anger is excusable, it must be when it is exerted by a detestation of vice.—I demanded him to restore:—alas! what was not in his power to return—Vengeance!—and shall these vermin—these spoilers of the fair—these murderers of the mind—lurk and creep about in dens, secure to themselves, and pillage

all around them?—Distracted with my rage—I charged him with his crime—exploded his baseness—condemned his villany—while coward guilt sat on his sullen brow, and, like a criminal conscious of his deed, tremblingly pronounced his fear.—He hoped means might be found for a sufficient atonement—offered a tender of his hand as a satisfaction, and a life devoted to her service as a recompence for his error.—His humiliation struck me—’twas the only means he could have contrived to assuage my anger. — I hesitated—paused—thought—and still must think on so important a concern:—assist me—I am half afraid of trusting my Harriot in the hands of a man, whose character I too well know to be the antipodes of Harriot’s—He all fire and dissipation;—she all meekness and sentiment!—nor can I think there is any hopes of reformation;—the offer proceeds more from surprise or fear, than justice and sincerity.—The world—the

world will exclaim, and my Harriot be a cast-off from society—Let her—I had rather see her thus, than miserably linked for life to a lump of vice—She shall retire to some corner of the world, and there weep out the remainder of her days in sorrow—forgetting the wretch who has abused her confidence, but ever remembering the friend who consoles her in retirement.—You, my dear Charles, shall bear a part with me in the delightful task of whispering “peace to those who are in trouble, and healing the broken in spirit.”

Adieu.

LAURENCE STERNE.

LETTER CXXX.

TO THE SAME.

SIR,

I FEEL the weight of obligation which your friendship has laid upon me, and if it should never be in my power to make you a recompence, I hope you will be recompensed at the "resurrection of the just."—I hope, Sir, we shall both be found in that catalogue;—and we are encouraged to hope, by the example of Abraham's faith, even "against hope."—I think there is, at least, as much probability of our reaching, and rejoicing in the "haven where we would be," as there was of the old Patriarch's having a child by his old wife.—There is not any person living or dead, whom I have so strong a desire to see and converse with as yourself:—indeed I have no inclination to visit, or say a syllable

ble to but a few persons in this lower vale of vanity and tears besides you;—but I often derive a peculiar satisfaction in conversing with the ancient and modern dead, — who yet live and speak excellently in their works.—My neighbours think me *often alone*,—and yet at such times I am in company with more than five hundred mutes—each of whom, at my pleasure, communicates his ideas to me by dumb signs—quite as intelligibly as any person living can do by *uttering* of words.—They always keep the distance from me which I direct,—and, with a motion of my hand, I can bring them as near to me as I please.—I lay hands on fifty of them sometimes in an evening, and handle them as I like:—they never complain of ill-usage,—and when dismissed from my presence,—though ever so abruptly—take no offence. Such convenience is not to be enjoyed—nor such liberty to be taken—with the living:—we are bound—in

point of good-manners, to admit all our pretended friends when they knock for an entrance, and dispense with all the nonsense or impertinence which they broach 'till they think proper to withdraw: nor can we take the liberty of humbly and decently opposing their sentiments without exciting their disgust, and being in danger of their splenetic representation after they have left us.

I am weary of talking to the *many*,—who though quick of hearing—are so “slow of heart to believe”—propositions which are next to self-evident;—you and I were not cast in *one mould*,—corporal comparison will attest it,—and yet we are fashioned so much alike, that we may pass for twins:—were it possible to take an inventory of all our sentiments and feelings—just and unjust—holy and impure—there would appear as little difference between them as there is between instinct and reason,—or—wit

and madness: the barriers which separate these—like the real essence of bodies—escape the piercing eye of metaphysics, and cannot be pointed out more clearly than geometers define a straight line, which is said to have length without breadth.—O ye learned anatomical aggregates, who pretend to instruct other aggregates! be as candid as the sage whom ye pretend to revere—and tell them, that all you know is, that you know nothing!

——— I have a *mort* to communicate to you on different subjects—my mountain will be in labour 'till I see you—and then—what then?—why you must expect to see it bring forth—a mouse.—I therefore beseech you to have a watchful eye to the cats;—but it is said that mice were designed to be killed by cats—cats to be worried by dogs, &c. &c.—This may be true—and I think I am made to be killed by my cough,—which is a perpetual plague to me; what, in the name of

found lungs, has my cough to do with you—or—you with my cough?

I am Sir, with the most perfect affection and esteem,

Your humble Servant,

LAURENCE STERNE,

L E T T E R CXXXI.

TO * * * *.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received your kind letter of critical, and, I will add, of parental advice, which, contrary to my natural humour, set me upon looking gravely for half a day together: sometimes I concluded you had not spoke out, but had stronger grounds for your hints and cautions than what your good-nature knew how to tell me, especially with regard to prudence, as a divine; and that you thought in your heart the vein of humour too free for the

solemn colour of my coat. A meditation upon Death had been a more suitable trimming to it, I own; but then it could not have been set on by me. M. F—, whom I regard in the class I do you, as my best of critics and well-wishers, preaches daily to me on the same text: "Get your preferment first, Lory," he says, "and then write and welcome." But suppose preferment is long a-coming—and, for aught I know, I may not be preferred till the resurrection of the just—and am all that time in labour, how must I bear my pains? Like pious divines? or, rather, like able philosophers, knowing that one passion is only to be combated with another? But to be serious (if I can), I will use all reasonable caution,—only with this caution along with it, not to spoil my book, that is, the air and originality of it, which must resemble the author; and I fear it is the number of these flighter touches, which make the resemblance, and identify it from all

others of the same stamp, which this under-strapping virtue of prudence would oblige me to strike out.—A very able critic, and one of my colour too, who has read over Tristram, made answer, upon my saying I would consider the colour of my coat as I corrected it, that that idea in my head would render my book not worth a groat.—Still I promise to be cautious; but deny I have gone as far as Swift: he keeps a due distance from Rabelais; I keep a due distance from him. Swift has said a hundred things I durst not say, unless I was Dean of St. Patrick's.

I like your caution, "*ambitiosa recides ornamenta.*" As I revise my book, I will shrive my conscience upon that sin, and whatever ornaments are of that kind shall be defaced without mercy. Ovid is justly censured for being "*ingenii sui amator*;" and it is a reasonable hint to me, as I'm not sure I am clear of it. To sport too much with your wit, or the game that wit has pointed out, is surfeiting; like

toying with a man's mistress, it may be very delightful solacement to the inamorato, but little to the by-stander. Though I plead guilty to part of the charge, yet it would greatly alleviate the crime, if my readers knew how much I have suppressed of this device. I have burnt more wit than I have published, on that very account, since I began to avoid the fault, I fear, I may yet have given proofs of.—I will reconsider Slop's fall, and my too minute description of it; but, in general, I am persuaded that the happiness of the Cervantic humour arises from this very thing,—of describing silly and trifling events with the circumstantial pomp of great ones. Perhaps this is overloaded, and I can ease it.—I have a project of getting Tristram put into the hands of the Archbishop, if he comes down this autumn, which will ease my mind of all trouble upon the topic of discretion.

I am, &c.

L. STERNE.

LETTER CXXXII.

TO MR. B.

SIR,

Exeter, July 1775.

THIS was quite an *Impromptu* of Yorick's after he had been thoroughly *soused*.—He drew it up in a few moments without stopping his pen. I should be glad to see it in your intended collection of Mr. Sterne's memoirs, &c. If you should have a copy of it, you will be able to rectify a misapplication of a term that Mr. Sterne could never be guilty of, as one great excellence of his writing lies in the most happy choice of metaphors and allusions—such as shewed his philosophic judgment, at the same time that they display his wit and genius—but it is not for me to comment on, or correct so great an original. I should have sent this fragment as soon as I saw Mrs. Medalle's advertisement, had

I not been at a distance from my papers. I expect much entertainment from this posthumous work of a man to whom no one is more indebted for amusement and instruction, than,

Sir,

Your humble servant,

S. P.

AN IMPROMPTU.

No—not one farthing would I give for such a coat in wet weather, or dry—If the sun shines you are sure of being melted, because it closes so tight about one—if it rains it is no more a defence than a cobweb—a very sieve, o' my conscience! that lets through every drop, and like many other things that are put on only for a cover, mortifies you with disappointment, and makes you curse the impostor, when it is too late to avail one's self of the discovery. Had I been wise I should have examined the claim the coat had to the

title of "defender of the body"—before I had trusted my body in it—I should have held it up to the light, like other suspicious matters, to have seen how much it was likely to admit of that which I wanted to keep out—whether it was no more than such a frail, flimsy contexture of flesh and blood, as I am fated to carry about with me through every tract of this dirty world, could have comfortably and safely dispensed with in so short a journey—taking into my account the chance of spreading trees—thick hedges o'erhanging the road—with twenty other coverts that a man may thrust his head under—if he is not violently pushed on by that d—d stimulus—you know where—that will not let a man sit still in one place for half a minute together—but like a young nettlesome tit is eternally on the fret, and is for pushing on still farther—or if the poor scared devil is not hunted tantivy by a hue and cry with gyves and a halter dangling before his eyes—now in either case he has not a

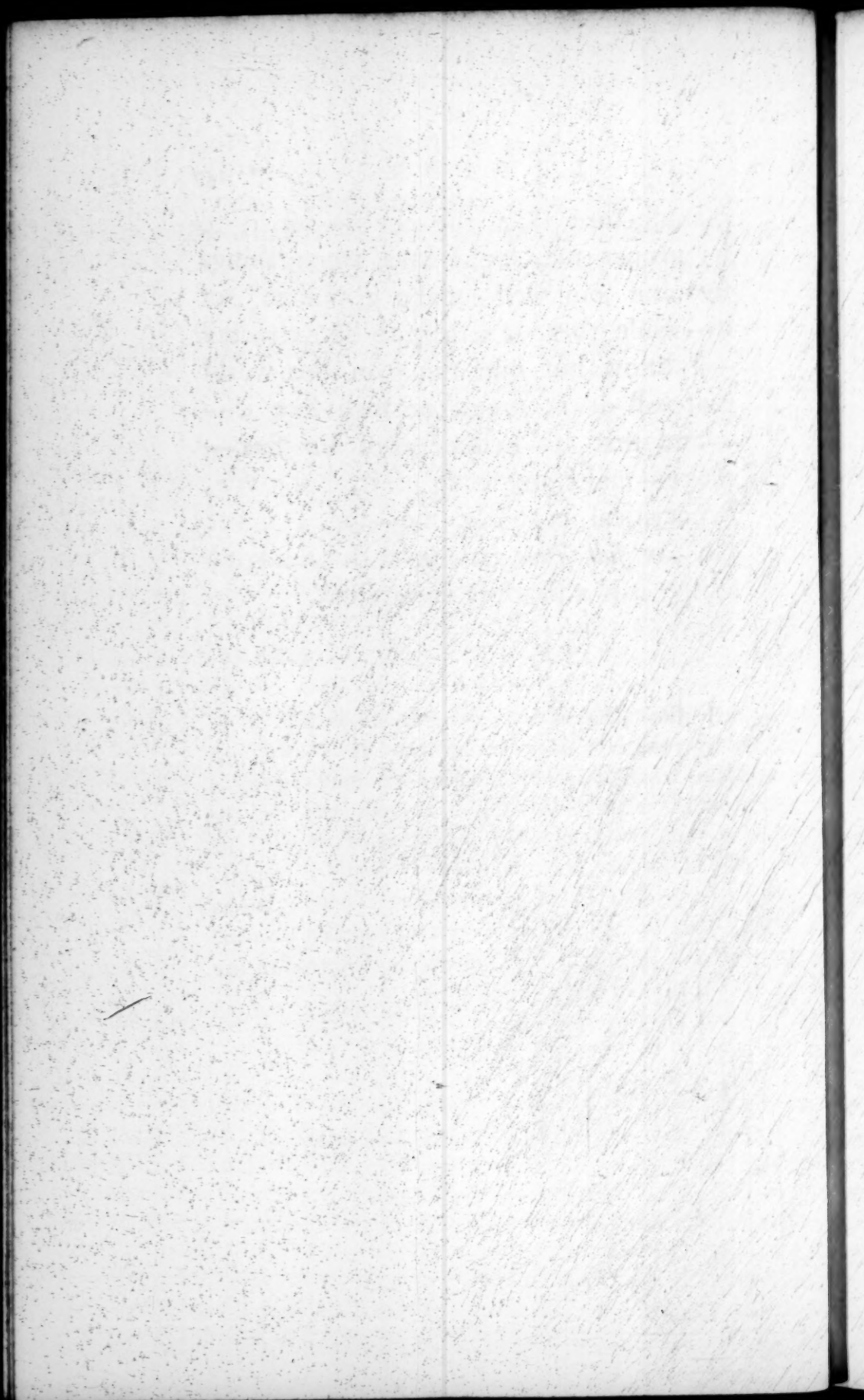
minute to throw away in standing still, but like King Lear must brave "the peltings of a pitiless storm," and give heaven leave to "rumble its belly-full—spit fire—or spout rain"—as spitefully as it pleaseth, without finding the inclination or the resolution to slacken his pace, lest something should be lost that might have been gained, or more gotten than he well knows how to get rid of—Now had I acted with as much prudence as some other good folks—I could name many of them who have been made b—ps within my remembrance, for having been hooded and muffled up in a larger quantity of this dark drab of mental manufacture than ever fell to my share—and absolutely for nothing else—as will be seen when they are undressed another day—Had I had but as much as might have been taken out of their cloth without lessening much of the size, or injuring in the least the shape, or contracting aught of the doublings and foldings, or confining to a less circumference, the su-

perb sweep of any one cloak that any one b—p ever wrapt himself up in—I should never have given this coat a place upon my shoulders. I should have seen by the light at one glance, how little it would keep out of rain, by how little it would keep in of darkness—This a coat for a rainy day? do pray, madam, hold it up to that window—did you ever see such an *illustrious* coat since the day you could distinguish between a coat and a pair of breeches?—My lady did not understand derivatives, and so she could not see quite through my splendid pun. Pope Sixtus would have blinded her with the same “darkness of excessive light.” What a flood of it breaks in thro’ this rent? what an irradiation beams through that? what twinklings—what sparklings as you wave it before your eyes in the broad face of the sun? Make a fan out of it for the ladies to look at their galants with at church—It has not served me for one purpose—it will serve them for two—This is coarse stuff—of worse

manufacture than the cloth—put it to its proper use, for I love when things sort and join well—make a philtre* of it—while there is a drop to be extracted—I know but one thing in the world that will draw, drain, or such like it—and that is—neither wool nor flax—make—make any thing of it, but a vile, hypocritical coat for me—for I never can say *sub Jove* (whatever Juno might) that “it is a pleasure to *be wet*.”

L. STERNE.

* This allusion is improper. A philtre originally signifies a love potion—and it is used as a noun from the verb *philtrate*—it must signify a *strainer*, not a *sucker*—cloth is sometimes used for the purpose of *draining* by means of its pores or capillary tubes, but its action is contrary to *filtration*. His meaning is obvious enough; but as he drew up this fragment without stopping his pen, as I was informed, it is no wonder he erred in the application of some of his terms.



THE
F R A G M E N T.



THE
F R A G M E N T.

C H A P. I.

Shewing two Things; first, what a Rabelaic Fellow LONGINUS RABELAICUS is; and secondly, how cavalierly he begins his Book.

My dear and thrice reverend brethren, as well archbishop and bishops, as the *rest* of the inferior clergy! would it not be a glorious thing, if any man of genius and capacity amongst us for such a work, was fully bent within himself, to sit down immediately and compose a thorough-stitch'd system of the KERUKOPAEDIA, fairly setting forth, to the best of his wit and memory, and collecting for that purpose all that is needful to be known, and understood of

that art?—Of what art, cried PANURGE? Good God! answered LONGINUS (making an exclamation, but taking care at the same time to moderate his voice), why, of the art of making all kinds of your theological, heb-dodomical, rostrummical, humdrummical what d'ye call 'ems—I will be shot, quoth EPISTEMON, if all this story of thine of a roasted horse, is simply no more than S—— Sausages! quoth PANURGE. Thou hast fallen twelve feet and about five inches below the mark, answer'd EPISTEMON, for I hold them to be *Sermons*—which said word (as I take the matter) being but a word of low degree, for a book of high rhetoric—LONGINUS RABELAICUS was fore-minded to usher and lead into his dissertation, with as much pomp and parade as he could afford;—and for my own part, either I know no more of Latin than my horse, or the KERUKO-PAEDIA is nothing but the art of making 'em—And why not, quoth GYM-NAST, of preaching them when we have

done?—Believe me, dear souls, this is half in half—and if some skilful body would but put us in a way to do this to some *tune*—Thou wouldst not have them *chanted* surely, quoth TRIBOULET, laughing?—No, nor *canted* neither, quoth GYMNAST, crying!—but what I mean, my friends, says LONGINUS RABELAICUS (who is certainly one of the greatest critics in the western world, and as Rabelaic a fellow as ever existed)—what I mean, says he, interrupting them both and resuming his discourse, is this, that if all the scatter'd rules of the KERUKOPAEDIA could be but once carefully collected into one code, as thick as PANURGE's head, and the whole *cleanly* digested—(pooh, says PANURGE, who felt himself aggrieved) and bound up, continued LONGINUS, by way of a regular institute, and then put into the hands of every licensed preacher in Great Britain, and Ireland, just before he began to compose, I maintain it—I deny it flatly, quoth PANURGE—What? answer'd LONGINUS RABELAICUS with all the temper in the world.

C H A P. II.

In which the Reader will begin to form a Judgment, of what an Historical, Dramatical, Anecdotal, Allegorical, and Comical Kind of a Work he has got hold of.

HOMENAS, who had to preach next Sunday (before God knows whom), knowing nothing at all of the matter—was all this while at it as hard as he could drive in the very next room:—for having fouled two clean sheets of his own, and being quite stuck fast in the entrance upon his third general *division*, and finding himself unable to get either forwards or backwards with any grace—“Curse it,” says he (thereby excommunicating every mother’s son who should think differently), “why may not a man lawfully call in for help in this, as well as any other human emergency?”—So without any more argumentation, except starting up and nimming down

from the top shelf but one, the second volume of CLARK—though without any felonious intention in so doing, he had begun to clap me in (making a joint first) five whole pages, nine round paragraphs, and a dozen and a half of good thoughts all of a row; and because there was a confounded high gallery—was transcribing it away like a little devil.—Now—quoth HOMENAS to himself, “though I hold all this to be fair and square, yet, if I am found out, there will be the deuce and all to pay.”—*Why are the bells ringing backwards, you lad? what is all that crowd about, honest man? HOMENAS was got upon Doctor CLARK’S back, sir—and what of that, my lad? Why, an please you, he has broke his neck, and fractured his skull, and befouled himself into the bargain, by a fall from the pulpit two stories high. Alas! poor HOMENAS! HOMENAS has done his business!—HOMENAS will never preach more while breath is in his body.—No, faith, I shall never again be able to tickle it off as I have done. I may sit up whole*

winter nights, baking my blood with hectic watchings, and write as solid as a FATHER of the church—or I may sit down whole summer days, evaporating my spirits into the finest thoughts, and write as florid as a MOTHER of it.—In a word, I may compose myself off my legs, and preach till I burst—and when I have done, it will be worse than if not done at all.—*Pray, Mr. Such-a-one, who held forth last Sunday? Doctor CLARK, I throw; says one. Pray what Doctor CLARK? says a second: Why HOMENAS's Doctor CLARK, quoth a third. O rare HOMENAS! cries a fourth; your servant, Mr. HOMENAS, quoth a fifth.—'Twill be all over with me, by Heaven—I may as well put the book from whence I took it.—Here HOMENAS burst into a flood of tears, which falling down helter skelter, ding dong, without any kind of intermission for six minutes and almost twenty-five seconds, had a marvellous effect upon his discourse; for the afore-said tears, do you mind, did so temper the wind that was rising upon the afore-*

said discourse, but falling for the most part perpendicularly, and hitting the spirits at right angles, which were mounting horizontally all over the surface of his harangue, they not only played the devil and all with the sublimity—but moreover the said tears, by their nitrous quality, did so refrigerate, precipitate, and hurry down to the bottom of his soul, all the unfavoury particles which lay fermenting (as you saw) in the middle of his conception, that he went on in the coolest and chastest style (for a *soliloquy* I think) that ever mortal man uttered.

“ This is really and truly a very hard case,” continued HOMENAS to himself—PANURGE, by the bye, and all the company in the next room, hearing all along every syllable he spoke; for you must know, that notwithstanding PANURGE had opened his mouth as wide as he could for his blood, in order to give a round answer to LONGINUS RABELAICUS’s interrogation, which concluded the last chapter—yet HOMENAS’s rhetoric

had poured in so like a torrent, flapdash through the waincoat amongst them, and happening at that *uncritical* crisis, when PANURGE had just put his ugly face into the above-said posture of defence—that he stopt short—he did indeed, and, though his head was full of matter, and he had screwed up every nerve and muscle belonging to it, till all cried *crack* again, in order to give a due projectile force to what he was going to let fly, full in LONGINUS RABELAICUS's teeth, who sat over against him—Yet for all that, he had the continence to contain himself, for he stopt short, I say, without uttering one word except, Z....ds—Many reasons may be assigned for this, but the most true, the most strong, the most hydrostatical, and the most philosophical reason, why PANURGE did not go on, was—that the fore-mentioned *torrent* did so *drown* his voice, that he had none left to go on with.—God help him, poor fellow! so he stopt short (as I have told you before), and all the time HOMENAS was speaking, he

saïd not another word, good or bad, but stood gaping, and staring, like what you please—so that the break, marked thus—which HOMENAS's grief had made in the middle of his discourse, which he could no more help than he could fly—produced no other change in the room where LONGINUS RABELAICUS, EPISTEMON, GYMNAST, TRIBOULET, and nine or ten more honest blades had got Kerukopædizing together, but that it gave time to GYMNAST to give PANURGE a good squashing chuck under his double chin; which PANURGE taking in good part, and just as it was meant by GYMNAST, he forthwith shut his mouth—and gently setting down upon a stool, though somewhat excentrically and out of neighbour's row, but listening, as all the rest did, with might and main, they plainly and distinctly heard every syllable of what you will find recorded in the very next chapter.

4 AP 63

5

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF A
GOOD WARM WATCH-COAT;

With which the present Possessor is not
content to cover his own Shoulders, un-
less he can cut out of it a Petticoat
for his Wife, and a Pair of Breeches
for his Son.

VOL. X.

M

f



THE
H I S T O R Y
OF A
GOOD WARM WATCH-COAT*, &c.
A POLITICAL ROMANCE.

SIR,

IN my last, for want of something better to write about, I told you what a world of fending and proving we have

* As the following piece was suppressed during the lifetime of Mr. Sterne, and as there are some grounds to believe that it was not intended by him for publication, an apology may be deemed necessary for inserting it in the present edition of his Works. It must be acknowledged, that a mere *jeu d'esprit* relating to a private dispute which could interest only a few, and which was intended to divert a small circle of friends, was with great propriety concealed while it might tend to revive

had of late in this little village* of ours, about an old cast pair of black

departed animosities, or give pain to any of the persons who were concerned in so trifling a contest. And these considerations seem to have had weight with those to whom the MS. was intrusted; it not having been made public until many years after it was written, nor until most of the gentlemen mentioned in it were dead. After the lapse of more than twenty years, it may be presumed that there can be no impropriety in giving one of the earliest of Mr. Sterne's *bagatelles* a place among his more important performances. The slightest sketches of a genius are too valuable to be neglected; and the present edition would be incomplete, if this composition, written immediately before *Tristram Shandy*, and which may be considered as the precursor of it, was omitted. As the whole of it alludes to facts and circumstances confined to the city of York, it will be necessary to observe, that it was occasioned by a controversy between Dr. Fountayne and Dr. Topham, in the year 1758, on a charge made by the latter, against the former, of a breach of promise, in withholding from him some preferment, which he had reason to expect. For the better illustration of this little Satire, a few notes are added, from the pamphlets which appeared while this insignificant difference was agitating.

* York.

plush breeches*, which *John*† our parish-clerk, about ten years ago, it seems, had made a promise of to one *Trim*‡, who is our sexton and dog-whipper.— To this you write me word, that you have had more than either one or two occasions to know a good deal of the shifty behaviour of the said master *Trim*—and that you are astonished, nor can you for your soul conceive, how so worthless a fellow, and so worthless a thing into the bargain, could become the occasion of so much racket as I have represented.—

Now, though you do not say expressly you could wish to hear any more about it, yet I see plainly enough I have raised your curiosity; and therefore, from the same motive that I slightly mentioned it at all in my last letter, I will in this give you a full and very circumstantial account of the whole affair.

* The Commissaryship of Pickering and Pockington.

† Dr. John Fountayne, Dean of York.

‡ Dr. Topham.

But, before I begin, I must first set you right in one very material point, in which I have misled you, as to the true cause of all this uproar amongst us—which does not take its rise, as I then told you, from the affair of the breeches, but, on the contrary, the whole affair of the breeches has taken its rise from it.—To understand which, you must know, that the first beginning of the squabble was not betwixt *John* the parish-clerk, and *Trim* the sexton, but betwixt the parson* of the parish and the said master *Trim*, about an old *watch-coat* †, that had hung up many years in the church, which *Trim* had set his heart upon; and nothing would serve *Trim*, but he must take it home, in order to have it converted into a *warm under-petticoat* for his wife, and a *jerkin* for himself against winter; which, in a plaintive tone, he

* Dr. Hutton, Archbishop of York.

† A patent place, in the gift of the Archbishop, which had been given to Dr. Topham for his life, and which, in 1758, he solicited to have granted to one of his family after his death.

most humbly begged his reverence would consent to.

I need not tell you, Sir, who have so often felt it, that a principle of strong compassion transports a generous mind sometimes beyond what is strictly right;—the parson was within an ace of being an honourable example of this very crime—for no sooner did the distinct words—*petticoat—poor wife—warm—winter*, strike upon his ear—but his heart warmed—and before *Trim* had well got to the end of his petition (being a gentleman of a frank open temper) he told him he was welcome to it with all his heart and soul.—But, *Trim*, says he, as you see I am but just got down to my living, and am an utter stranger to all parish matters, knowing nothing about this old watch-coat you beg of me, having never seen it in my life, and therefore cannot be a judge whether 'tis fit for such a purpose, or, if it is, in truth know not whether 'tis mine to bestow upon you or not—you must have a week or ten days patience, till I can

make some enquiries about it—and, if I find it is in my power, I tell you again, man, your wife is heartily welcome to an under-petticoat out of it, and you to a jerkin, was the thing as good again as you represent it.

It is necessary to inform you, Sir, in this place, that the parson was earnestly bent to serve *Trim* in this affair, not only from the motive of generosity, which I have justly ascribed to him, but likewise from another motive, and that was by making some sort of recompence for a multitude of small services which *Trim* had occasionally done, and indeed was continually doing (as he was much about the house) when his own man was out of the way.—For all these reasons together, I say, the parson of the parish intended to serve *Trim* in this matter to the utmost of his power. All that was wanting, was, previously to enquire if any one had a *claim* to it, or whether, as it had time immemorial hung up in the church, the taking it down might not raise a clamour in the parish. These

enquiries were the things that *Trim* dreaded in his heart—he knew very well, that, if the parson should but say one word to the churchwardens about it, there would be an end of the whole affair. For this, and some other reasons not necessary to be told you at present, *Trim* was for allowing no time in this matter—but on the contrary doubled his diligence and importunity at the vicarage-house—plagued the whole family to death—prest his suit morning, noon, and night; and, to shorten my story, teased the poor gentleman, who was but in an ill state of health, almost out of his life about it.

You will not wonder when I tell you, that all this hurry and precipitation, on the side of master *Trim*, produced its natural effect on the side of the parson, and that was, a suspicion that all was not right at the bottom.

He was one evening sitting alone in his study, weighing and turning this doubt every way in his mind, and after an hour and a half's serious deliberation

upon the affair, and running over *Trim's* behaviour throughout—he was just saying to himself—*it must be so*—when a sudden rap at the door put an end to his soliloquy, and in a few minutes to his doubts too; for a labourer in the town, who deemed himself past his fifty-second year, had been returned by the constables in the militia list—and he had come with a groat in his hand to search the parish-register for his age. The parson bid the poor fellow put the groat into his pocket, and go into the kitchen—then shutting the study-door, and taking down the parish-register—*who knows*, says he, *but I may find something here about this self-same watch-coat?* He had scarce unclasped the book, in saying this, when he popped on the very thing he wanted, fairly wrote in the first page, pasted to the inside of one of the covers, whereon was a memorandum about the very thing in question, in these express words—*Memorandum.* “The great watch-coat was purchased
“and given, above two hundred years

“ ago, by the lord of the manor to this
“ parish-church, to the sole use and be-
“ hoof of the poor sextons thereof, and
“ their successors for ever, to be worn
“ by them respectively in winterly cold
“ nights in ringing *complines*, *passing bells*,
“ &c. which the said lord of the manor
“ had done in piety to keep the poor
“ wretches warm, and for the good of
“ his own soul, for which they were di-
“ rected to pray, &c.” *Just heaven!* said
the parson to himself, looking upwards,
what an escape have I had! give this for
an under-petticoat to Trim's wife! I would
not have consented to such a desecration to
be Primate of all England—nay, I would
not have disturbed a single button of it for
all my tithes.

Scarce were the words out of his mouth, when in pops *Trim* with the whole subject of the exclamation under both his arms—I say under both his arms—for he had actually got it ript and cut out ready, his own jerkin under one arm, and the petticoat under the other, in order to carry to the taylor to be

made up, and had just stepped in, in high spirits, to shew the parson how cleverly it had held out.

There are now many good families subsisting in the world, but which I have time neither to recollect or look for, which would give you a strong conception of the astonishment and honest indignation which this unexpected stroke of *Trim's* impudence impressed upon the parson's looks—let it suffice to say, that it exceeded all fair description—as well as all power of proper resentment——except this, that *Trim* was ordered, in a stern voice, to lay the bundles down upon the table—to go about his business, and wait upon him, at his peril, the next morning at eleven precisely.—Against this hour, like a wise man, the parson had sent to desire *John* the parish-clerk, who bore an exceeding good character, as a man of truth, and who, having moreover a pretty freehold of about eighteen pounds a year in the township, was a leading man in it; and,

upon the whole, was such a one, of whom it might be said, that he rather did honour to his office, than that his office did honour to him—him he sends for, with the churchwardens, and one of the sidersmen, a grave, knowing old man, to be present—for, as *Trim* had withheld the whole truth from the parson, touching the watch-coat, he thought it probable he would as certainly do the same thing to others. Though this, I said, was wise, the trouble of the precaution might have been spared—because the parson's character was unblemished—and he had ever been held by the world in the estimation of a man of honour and integrity.—*Trim's* character, on the contrary, was as well known, if not in the world, at least in all the parish, to be that of a little, dirty, pimping, pettifogging, ambidextrous fellow—who neither cared what he did or said of any, provided he could get a penny by it. This might, I said, have made any precaution needless—but you must know, as the parson had in a manner

but just got down to his living, he dreaded the consequences of the least ill impression on his first entrance among his parishioners, which would have disabled him from doing them the good he wished—so that out of regard to his flock, more than the necessary care due to himself—he was resolved not to lie at the mercy of what resentment might vent, or malice lend an ear to.—

Accordingly the whole matter was rehearsed, from first to last, by the parson, in the manner I've told you, in the hearing of *John* the parish-clerk, and in the presence of *Trim*.

Trim had little to say for himself, except “that the parson had absolutely promised to befriend him and his wife in the affair to the utmost of his power; that the watch-coat was certainly in his power, and that he might still give it him if he pleased.”

To this the parson's reply was short, but strong, “That nothing was in his power to do, but what he could do *honestly*—that, in giving the coat to him

and his wife, he should do a manifest wrong to the *next* sexton, the great watch-coat being the most comfortable part of the place—that he should moreover injure the right of his own successor, who would be just so much a worse patron, as the worth of the coat amounted to; and, in a word, he declared, that his whole intent in promising that coat, was charity to *Trim*, but *wrong* to no man—that was a reserve, he said, made in all cases of this kind: and he declared solemnly, *in verbo sacerdotis*, that this was his meaning, and was so understood by *Trim* himself.”

With the weight of this truth, and the great good sense and strong reason which accompanied all the parson said on the subject—poor *Trim* was driven to his last shift—and begged he might be suffered to plead his right and title to the watch-coat, if not by *promise*, at least by *servitude*—it was well known how much he was entitled to it upon these scores: that he had blacked the parson’s shoes without count, and greased

his boots above fifty times—that he had run for eggs in the town upon all occasions—whetted the knives at all hours—caught his horse, and rubbed him down—that, for his wife, she had been ready upon all occasions to char for them; and neither he nor she, to the best of his remembrance, ever took a farthing, or any thing beyond a mug of ale.—To this account of his services, he begged leave to add those of his wishes, which, he said, had been equally great—he affirmed, and was ready, he said, to make it appear, by a number of witnesses, “ he had drank his reverence’s health a thousand times (by the bye he did not add out of the parson’s own ale)—that he had not only drank his health, but wished it, and never came to the house but asked his man kindly how he did; that, in particular, about half a year ago, when his reverence cut his finger in paring an apple, he went half a mile *

* “ Long before any thing of my Patent was thought of, I not only most sincerely lamented

to ask a cunning woman what was good to staunch blood, and actually returned with a cobweb in his breeches pocket. Nay, says *Trim*, it was not a fortnight ago, when your reverence took that strong purge, that I went to the far end of the whole town, to borrow you a closestool—and came back, as the neighbours who flouted me will all bear witness, with the pan upon my head, and never thought it too much.” *Trim* concluded this pathetic remonstrance with saying “he hoped his reverence’s heart would not suffer him to requite so many faithful services by so unkind a return:—that if it was so, as he was the first, so he hoped he should be the last example of a man of his condition so treated.”—This plan of *Trim*’s defence, which *Trim* had put himself upon, could admit of no other reply than a general

“the Archbishop’s illness, but made it my business to enquire after every place and remedy that might help his Grace in his complaints.”

Extract of a Letter from Dr. Topham,
p. 26. of *Dr. Fountayne’s Answer*.

took no small pains to get into *John's* good graces, in order, as it afterwards appeared, to coax a promise out of him of a pair of breeches, which *John* had then by him, of black plush, not much the worse for wearing—*Trim* only begged, for God's sake, to have them bestowed upon him when *John* should think fit to cast them.—

Trim was one of these kind of men who loved a bit of finery in his heart, and would rather have a tatter'd rag of a better body's, than the best plain whole thing his wife could spin him.

John, who was naturally unsuspicious, made no more difficulty of promising the breeches than the parson had done in promising the great coat; and indeed with something less reserve—because the breeches were *John's own*, and he could give them, without wrong, to whom he thought fit.

It happened, I was going to say unluckily, but I should rather say most luckily, for *Trim*, for he was the only gainer by it, that a quarrel, about some

six or eight weeks after this, broke out betwixt *the* * *late* parson of the parish and *John* the clerk. Somebody (and it was thought to be nobody but *Trim*) had put it into the parson's head, "that *John's* desk † in the church was at the least four inches higher than it should be—that the thing gave offence, and was indecorous, inasmuch as it approached too near upon a level with the parson's desk itself."—This hardship the parson complained of loudly, and told *John*, one day after prayers, "he could bear it no longer—and would have it altered, and brought down as it should be." *John* made no other reply, but "that the desk was not of his raising:—that 'twas not one hair-breadth higher than he found it—and that as he found it so he would

* Archbishop Herring.

† This alludes to the right of appointing preachers for the vacant stalls, which Dr. Fountainne, as Dean of York, claimed against the Archbishop.

leave it.—In short, he would neither make an encroachment, neither would he suffer one.”—The *late* parson might have his virtues, but the leading part of his character was not *humility*—so that *John*’s stiffness in this point was not likely to reconcile matters.—This was *Trim*’s harvest.

After a friendly hint to *John* to stand his ground, away hies *Trim* to make his market at the vicarage.—What passed there I will not say, intending not to be uncharitable; so shall content myself with only guessing at it from the sudden change that appeared in *Trim*’s dress for the better—for he had left his old ragged coat, hat, and wig, in the stable, and was come forth strutting across the church-yard, yclad in a good charitable cast coat, large hat, and wig, which the parson had just given him.—Ho! ho! hollo! *John*, cries *Trim*, in an insolent bravo, as loud as ever he could bawl—see here, my lad, how fine I am.—The more shame for you, answered *John* seriously

—Do you think, *Trim*, says he, such finery, gained by such services, becomes you, or can wear well?—Fye upon it, *Trim*, I could not have expected this from you, considering what friendship you pretended, and how kind I have ever been to you—how many shillings, and sixpences, I have generously lent you in your distresses.—Nay, it was but the other day that I promised you these black plush breeches I have on.—Rot your breeches, quoth *Trim* (for *Trim*'s brain was half turn'd with his new finery) rot your breeches, says he—I would not take them up were they laid at my door—give them, and be d——d to you, to whom you like—I would have you to know I can have a better pair of the parson's any day in the week.—*John* told him plainly, as his word had once passed him, he had a spirit above taking advantage of his insolence in giving them away to another—but, to tell him his mind freely, he thought he had got so many favours of that kind, and was so likely to get

many more for the same services, of the parson, that he had better give up the breeches, with good nature, to some one who would be more thankful for them.

Here *John* mentioned *Mark* * *Slender* (who it seems the day before had asked *John* for them), not knowing they were under promise to *Trim*—"Come, *Trim*, says he, let poor *Mark* have them—you know he has not a pair to his a—, besides, you see he is just of my size, and they will fit to a T, whereas if I give 'em to you, look ye, they are not worth much, and besides, you could not get your backside into them, if you had them, without tearing them all to pieces."—Every tittle of this was most undoubtedly true, for *Trim*, you must know, by foul feeding, and playing the goodfellow at the parson's, was grown somewhat gross about the lower parts, *if not higher*; so that, as all *John* said upon the occasion was fact, *Trim* with

* Dr. Braithwaite.

much ado, and after a hundred hums and hahs, at last, out of mere compassion to *Mark*, signs*, seals, and delivers up ALL RIGHT INTEREST AND PRETENSIONS WHATSOEVER IN AND TO THE SAID BREECHES, THEREBY BINDING HIS HEIRS, EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND ASSIGNS, NEVER MORE TO CALL THE SAID CLAIM IN QUESTION.— All this renunciation was set forth, in an ample manner, to be in pure pity to *Mark's* nakedness—but the secret was, *Trim* had an eye to, and firmly expected, in his own mind, the great green pulpit-cloth†, and old velvet cushion, which were that very year

* Extract of a letter from Dr. Topham to Dr. Fountayne: “ As Dr. Ward has proposed to resign the jurisdiction of Pickering and Pocklington to Dr. Braithwaite, if you have not any other objection, I shall very readily give up what INTEREST arises to me in these jurisdictions from your friendship and regard ” P. 5. of *Dr. Fountayne's Answer to Dr. Topham*.

† The Commissaryship of Dean of York, and the Commissaryship of the Dean and Chapter of York.

to be taken down—which, by the bye, could he have wheedled *John* a second time, as he had hoped, would have made up the loss of the breeches sevenfold.

Now, you must know, this pulpit-cloth and cushion were not in *John's* gift, but in the church-wardens*, &c. However, as I said above that *John* was a leading man in the parish, *Trim* knew he could help him to 'em if he would—but *John* had got a surfeit of him—so, when the pulpit-cloth, &c. were taken down, they were immediately given (*John* having a great say in it) to *William Doe* †, who understood very well what use to make of them.

As for the old breeches, poor *Mark* lived to wear them but a short time, and they got into the possession of *Lorry Slim* ‡, an unlucky wight, by whom they are still worn—in truth, as you

* The members of the Chapter.

† Mr. Stables.

‡ Mr. Sterne himself.

will guess, they are very thin by this time.

But *Lorry* has a light heart, and what recommends them to him is this, that, as thin as they are, he knows that *Trim*, let him say what he will to the contrary, still envies the *possessor* of them, and with all his pride would be very glad to wear them after *him*.

Upon this footing have these affairs slept quietly for near ten years,—and would have slept for ever, but for the unluckly kicking bout, which, as I said, has ripped this squabble up afresh; so that it was no longer ago than last week, that *Trim* met and* insulted *John* in the public town-way before a hundred people—tax'd him with the promise of the old cast pair of black breeches, notwithstanding *Trim*'s solemn renunciation—twitted him with the pulpit-cloth and velvet cushion—as good

* At the Sessions dinner, where Dr. Topham charged Dr. Fountayne with the breach of his promise, in giving the Commissaryship of Pocklington and Pickering to another person.

as told him he was ignorant of the common duties of his clerkship; adding, very insolently, that he knew not so much as to give out a common psalm in tune.

John contented himself by giving a plain answer to every article that *Trim* had laid to his charge, and appealed to his neighbours who remembered the whole affair—and, as he knew there was never any thing to be got by wrestling with a chimney-sweeper, he was going to take his leave of *Trim* for ever. But hold—the mob by this time had got round them, and their high mightinesses insisted upon having *Trim* tried upon the spot.—

Trim was accordingly tried, and after a full hearing, was convicted a second time, and handled more roughly by one or more of them than even at the parson's.—

Trim, says one, are you not ashamed of yourself to make all this rout and disturbance in the town, and set neighbours together by the ears, about an old

—worn-out — pair of cast — breeches not worth half a crown? Is there a cast coat, or a place in the whole town, that will bring you in a shilling, but what you have snapped up like a greedy hound as you are?——

In the first place, are you not sexton and dog-whipper*, worth three pounds a year? Then you begged the churchwardens to let your wife have the washing and darning of the church-linen, which brings you in thirteen shillings and four pence; then you have six shillings and eight-pence for oiling and

* “ In the first place, would any one imagine
 “ that Dr. Topham, who was now Master of the
 “ Faculties—Commissary to the Archbishop of
 “ York—Official to the Archdeacon of York—
 “ Official to the Archdeacon of the East Riding—
 “ Official to the Archdeacon of Cleveland—Offi-
 “ cial to the peculiar Jurisdiction of Howdenshire
 “ —Official to the Precentor—Official to the
 “ Chancellor of the Church of York—and Offi-
 “ cial to several of the Prebendaries thereof,
 “ could accept of so poor an addition as a Com-
 “ missaryship of five guineas per annum? P. 8. of
Dr. Fountayne's Answer to Dr. Topham.

winding up the clock, both paid you at Easter—the pounder's place, which is worth forty shillings a year, you have got that too—you are the bailiff, which the late parson got you, which brings you in forty shillings more.

Besides all this, you have fix pounds a year paid you quarterly for being mole-catcher to the parish. Aye, says the luckless wight abovementioned (who was standing close by him with the plush breeches on) “you are not only mole-catcher, *Trim*, but you catch *STRAY CONIES* too in the *dark*, and you pretend a licence for it, which, I trow, will be looked into at the next quarter sessions.” I maintain it, I have a licence, says *Trim*, blushing as red as scarlet—I have a licence, and, as I farm a warren in the next parish, I will catch conies every hour in the night. *You catch conies!* says a toothless old woman just passing by.

This set the mob a-laughing, and sent every man home in perfect good

humour, except *Trim*, who waddled very slowly off with that kind of inflexible gravity only to be equalled by one animal in the creation, and surpassed by none.

I am,

Sir, yours, &c. &c.

P O S T S C R I P T.

I HAVE broke open my letter to inform you, that I missed the opportunity of sending it by the messenger, who I expected would have called upon me in his return thro' this village to York; so it has lain a week or ten days by me—I am not sorry for the disappointment, because something has since happened in continuation of this affair, which I am thereby enabled to transmit to you all under one trouble.

When I finished the above account, I thought (as did every soul in the parish) *Trim* had met with so thorough a rebuff from *John* the parish clerk, and the town's folks, who all took against him, that *Trim* would be glad to be quiet, and let the matter rest.

But, it seems, it is not half an hour ago since *Trim** sallied forth again, and,

* Alluding to Dr. Topham's Reply to Dr. Fountayne's Answer.

having borrowed a fow-gelder's horn, with hard blowing he got the whole town round him, and endeavoured to raise a disturbance, and fight the whole battle over again—alleged that he had been used in the last fray worse than a dog, not by *John* the parish-clerk, for I should not, quoth *Trim*, have valued him a rush single-hands—but all the town sided with him, and twelve men in *buckram** set upon me, all at once, and kept me in play at sword's point for three hours together.

Besides, quoth *Trim*, there were two misbegotten knaves in *Kendal-green*, who lay all the while in ambush in *John's* own house, and they all sixteen came upon my back, and let drive at me all together—a plague, says *Trim*, of all cowards.

Trim repeated his story above a dozen times, which made some of the neighbours pity him, thinking the poor fel-

* In Dr. Topham's Reply he asserts, that Dr. Fountayne's Answer was *the child and offspring of many parents*, p. 1.

low crack-brain'd, and that he actually believed what he said.

After this *Trim* dropped the affair of the breeches, and began a fresh dispute about the reading desk, which I told you had occasioned some small dispute between the *late* parson and *John* some years ago.—This reading desk, as you will observe, was but an episode wove into the main story by the bye, for the main affair was *the battle of the breeches and the great coat*.

However, *Trim* being at last driven out of these two citadels—he has seized hold, in his retreat, of this reading desk, with a view, as it seems, to take shelter behind it.

I cannot say but the man has fought it out obstinately enough, and, had his cause been good, I should have really pitied him. For, when he was driven out of the *great watch-coat*, you see he did not run away; no—he retreated behind the breeches, and, when he could make nothing of it behind the breeches, he got behind the reading desk. To

what other hold *Trim* will next retreat, the politicians of this village are not agreed. Some think his next move will be towards the rear of the parson's boot; but, as it is thought he cannot make a long stand there, others are of opinion, that *Trim* will once more in his life get hold of the parson's horse, and charge upon him, or perhaps behind him: but, as the horse is not easy to be caught, the more general opinion is, that, when he is driven out of the reading desk, he will make his last retreat in such a manner, as, if possible, to gain the *close stool*, and defend himself behind it to the very last drop.

If *Trim* should make this movement, by my advice he should be left, besides his citadel, in full possession of the field of battle, where 'tis certain he will keep every body a league off, and may hop by himself till he is weary. Besides, as *Trim* seems bent upon *purging* himself, and may have abundance of foul humours to work off, I think he cannot be better placed.

But this is all matter of speculation—
Let me carry you back to matter of fact,
and tell you what kind of stand *Trim*
has actually made behind the said desk:
“ Neighbours and townsmen all, I will
be sworn before my Lord Mayor, that
John and his nineteen men in *buckram*
have abused me worse than a dog, for
they told you that I play’d fast and go
loose with the *late* parson and him in
that old dispute of theirs about the
reading desk, and that I made matters
worse between them, and not better.”

Of this charge *Trim* declared he was
as innocent as the child that was unborn
—that he would be book-sworn he had
no hand in it.

He produced a strong witness, and
moreover insinuated, that *John* himself,
instead of being angry for what he had
done in it, had actually thanked him—
Aye, *Trim*, says the wight in the plush
breeches, but that was, *Trim*, the day
before *John* found thee out. Besides,
Trim, there is nothing in that, for the
very year that you was made town’s-

pounder, thou knowest well that I both thanked thee myself, and moreover gave thee a good warm supper for turning *John Lund's* cows and horses out of my hard corn close, which if thou hadst not done (as thou toldst me), I should have lost my whole crop; whereas *John Lund* and *Thomas Patt*, who are both here to testify, and are both willing to take their oaths on't, that thou thyself wast the very man who set the gate open—and after all, it was not thee, *Trim*, 'twas the blacksmith's poor lad who turned them out—so that a man may be thanked and rewarded too for a good turn which he never did, nor ever did intend.

Trim could not sustain this unexpected stroke—so *Trim* marched off the field without colours flying, or his horn founding, or any other ensigns of honour whatever.—Whether after this *Trim* intends to rally a second time—or whether he may not take it into his head to claim the victory—none but *Trim* himself can inform you.

However, the general opinion upon the whole is this, that, in three several pitch'd battles, *Trim* has been so *trimm'd* as never disastrous hero was *trimm'd* before.

4 AP 63

F I N I S.

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